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*The Library of Tomorrow*



# The Library *of* Tomorrow

*A Symposium*



EDITED BY

EMILY MILLER DANTON

1939

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## Introduction

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FOR THOSE who are accustomed to the services of a great city library—marble halls, vast collections, trained personnel, mechanical book conveyors, electric signals—it is difficult to visualize the first tax-supported public library in America, opened in Peterboro, New Hampshire, in 1833. It consisted of a handful of books, collected in one room, accessible to readers a few hours a week, but it was an acorn and from it has sprung a vigorous sturdy growth, spreading over the country, covering some territory sparsely, to be sure, but thickly spread in others. Subscription libraries there had been, even in the eighteenth century, and the college library, too, was of early origin, Harvard's, the first, having been begun in 1638 and eight others following before the Revolution. But Peterboro is a landmark in expressing for the first time the ideal of *free reading for the people*.

Today there are over 17,000 libraries of all kinds in the United States, with total collections of more than 160,000,000 volumes. Some of them are not unlike that first little library in Peterboro—they are small and poor and struggling. On the other hand, there are libraries which can boast of one, two, and three million volumes; and there are libraries all the way between. Every one of more than 1,000 institutions of higher education in the country has

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a library of a sort; few cities above 50,000 are without them; there are libraries in banks and manufacturing plants, in insurance companies and in newspaper offices, in CCC camps and in national parks. In some states, notably California, county-wide library service is well established and highly effective. City high schools often have excellent libraries and excellent service, while grade school libraries are showing steady growth.

Who are the beneficiaries of all this library activity? Theoretically, everybody. Students, business men, clubwomen, children, mature people seeking the education they missed in youth, and people of any age who are looking only for amusement and recreation. Actually, and in spite of the rapid growth of the library idea, about 45,000,000 people in the United States do not have access to free books and book service, and several million more are only a little better off. As is to be expected, the poorer regions are the backward ones in library facilities, while the great cities and, generally speaking, the closely populated Eastern states are usually well equipped.

It is now pretty well established that the library—after the faculty—is the first essential of the college or university. Indeed, nearly every change in educational trends lays new emphasis on books and reading. It is no less true that the public library ranks with the school in importance to the community. Its carefully chosen collections, its intelligent, aggressive service, are reflected in the quickened intelligence of the people who expose themselves to its influence—in the business men, the young people, the children.

Libraries are never “finished”; they grow continually, not only because they serve more readers and buy more books, not only because social changes and progress place new and increased demands upon them, but because librarians and trustees have ideas and are not afraid to experiment with them. Are libraries going in one well-defined direction? If they are, this book should bring out the fact, for its purpose is to offer a picture of what libraries may be, and may be doing, 25 years or so from now. A few types of libraries will

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be missed from the symposium, but an effort has been made to include as many as possible. It is hoped that the picture these chapters present may serve to show, indirectly, the great variety and signal importance of library activities today and, more particularly, that it may indicate in sharp relief the tremendous potentialities of the library of tomorrow in terms of service to humanity.

For this compilation, library specialists of all types and a few non-librarians with closely allied interests were invited to express freely their ideas and hopes for the library of tomorrow—based always upon *possibilities*, but looking perhaps a little beyond what actually may be expected to come within a quarter of a century. Some of the chapters were prepared in 1937, others in 1938, and it may be that a few authors might have wished to alter their statements slightly, if an opportunity to do so could have been given them.

The twenty authors, whose opinions are wholly their own, have expressed varying, divergent, and occasionally even conflicting views. This is as it should be, of course, and provides a provocative challenge to the reader, whether he be directly concerned or not. Because of the present and probable future place of libraries in our society, we hope and believe that this volume will be of interest to the "intelligent layman" and of value to sociologists, educators, political scientists and others concerned with the future of American civilization.

Whatever "the library of tomorrow" may be, the experience of the past 100, or even 25 years, as well as the opinions of these writers, indicate that it will be considerably different from the library of today and that it will unquestionably be an even more useful, versatile and diversified agency serving the public good.

E. M. D.

December 1938



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## *Looking Forward, a Fantasy*

BY FREDERICK P. KEPPEL

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WITH an earnest determination to acquire some ideas about the library of tomorrow I went to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel on a day in June when I knew that librarians by the thousand were to be found there.

As it turned out, I did get some ideas, but not from a librarian. It was from my friend Alvin Johnson, of the New School for Social Research. Back in 1916 he had been commandeered to visit and report upon the Carnegie libraries throughout the United States, and he was now once again on the trail after a gap of twenty-one years in his library activities. As he was telling me, in a sort of *vingt ans après*, of the changes he observed in libraries and librarians, my vagrant thoughts turned to wondering how it would be if one could look twenty-one years ahead, instead of twenty-one years back. Pretty soon they had conjured up a mythical delegate to this very A.L.A. convention, to bear the historic name of Rip Van Winkle—or, on second thought, Rippina Van Winkle—a delegate fated to return from the convention utterly spent by its stimulations and its fatigues, and, following the family precedent, to fall into a sleep of characteristic profundity and duration.

What would Rippina Van Winkle, thoroughly refreshed after this good long nap, find of professional interest in 1958? To begin

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with, I doubt if she would be able to recognize the public library building, were she to wake up in a town that made any pretensions to up-to-dateness. She would find no imposing façade, no Greek columns or Gothic towers, and no dorsal hump as the outward and visible sign of the book stacks. On the contrary, the building would be more like a compact factory, and its flat roof would look like a small landing platform, which is precisely what it would be.

However, on being assured that the strange structure was really the town library, she would enter it and be more astonished than ever. To begin with, she would already have passed through double doors, for the library would be air-conditioned, both for temperature and for humidity and, incidentally, it would be noise-conditioned as well. The light of heaven would have full play, with no columns to cut it off, nor Gothic mullions to cross its pathway. Artificial light as needed would be of a kind hitherto unknown to her. There would be no great reading room, but in its place an assortment of smaller chambers, some of them lined with books, to be sure, but more of them looking as if they had strayed from some wholly different type of institution. One, for example, might have come from a museum of science and industry, with its array of models of various kinds. Several others obviously might have come from a physics or chemistry laboratory, and still others from a musical conservatory or theater or art museum. Among these latter, one room would have special equipment for stereoscopy and for polarization to restore the third dimension to sculptural and architectural material. The rooms for paintings would have their color sifters and analyzers. Perhaps the most astonishing of all would be the practice floors for the students of the dance, with photographic recording apparatus for comparison, odious or otherwise.

Backstage scenes would seem at least as strange as the public rooms, for, though the young assistants to be found there would be as busy as ever, they would not be stamping books by hand, or lettering cards, or sorting them, but would be tending machines which apparently performed these and other functions at the turn of

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a dial. In fact, librarianship would seem to Rippina to be largely a setting of dials. There would be no pages, but instead dial-controlled containers would be running the errands of the library—a little reminiscent of the electrically directed torpedoes of old. The older librarians here and there might be carrying on their share of a long-distance wireless committee meeting (for librarians would still be strong on committees!), or might be conversing with a visitor, or listening to records, or even reading a book.

Were Miss Van Winkle to speak to no one but the youngsters who were of necessity taking all these matters for granted, having known no other world, then would her visit result in confusion worse confounded. If, on the other hand, she were fortunate enough to fall into conversation with a contemporary, someone old enough to have been a librarian in the far-off days of 1937, one who had stuck to her job and seen the changes as they took place, one by one, then perhaps to some degree things might be straightened out. After a barrage of questions by the visitor, which got nowhere, because the answers were of necessity unintelligible, the old hand would call a halt—at least according to my musings—and would deliver a brief address somewhat along these lines:

“The beginnings of most of these things which now cause you consternation were to be seen back in 1937, not everywhere, of course, but here and there. We needed a new conception of the library and the librarian, however, before we could approach the possibilities of their development. We knew then that the library was a repository of records of what human beings had learned, and thought, and dreamed, but we assumed that these records must be printed records. Even in 1937 we were beginning to ask ourselves why the records must always be in print, and we were beginning to cheat a little with reproductions of pictures and phonograph records. Now, of course, everyone knows that the form of the record makes no difference whatever. It is just as likely to address the

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ear as the eye and is just as likely to be recorded on disc or charged wire as on paper. The problem of selecting non-written records for our shelves is just as hard a job as the selection of books, but when we have made up our minds to get any particular record, we have the equipment to make it available to the public. And don't forget, just as there are editions and editions of books, so there are records of different performances of music and drama, color photographs of different paintings taken under different conditions and by different processes. The large libraries always contain several different editions of this kind for comparison.

"Or, you can hear a great political address, or a moving sermon, or a scientific lecture; you can both see and hear a famous trial, or the Olympic games, or a plenary session at Geneva (yes, there is still a League of Nations). Bear in mind, too, that the motion picture is not only the most generally used means of recording and conveying information of all sorts, but it has itself become, after long years of commercialization, the vehicle for masterpieces of creative art.

"Did you look into any of the radio rooms? The interesting thing here is that the newspaper and the radio have long ago learned to work together and not at cross-purposes, and the running critique of all radio performances conducted by the great journals is one of our most used works of reference. Incidentally, we keep back numbers of all important broadcasts on our shelves.

"Youngsters, and older people as well, come to the library to increase their speed in the use of the various calculating machines which have developed from the old slide rule—or they come to improve their foreign language facility through the polytelephonic service, or to train their sensitiveness to color or pitch or odor. They come, too, to better their skill at games by playing against the photo-bogey.

"Of course, this is a city library, but you will find that the smaller towns and the rural centers are much the same, though there is less material in stock, and more coming in from outside on request;



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for example, we are responsible here for looking after the needs of a hundred smaller libraries. We provide the service at cost, and this includes airplane delivery of books and films, as well as delivery by the old-fashioned trucks.

"All these new services cost money as well as brains and energy, and new money doesn't seem any easier to come by than it was in '37. So we have saved the money we needed in one way or another just as we did long ago. For instance, do you miss the old-fashioned stacks? We don't need them any more. As soon as a book or journal has had its active day, it is no longer kept to gather moss, but is replaced by a film, and a film in a pill box doesn't take much space, particularly when you realize that we are down to a standard of four millimeters for everything. And even most of the pill boxes ultimately go into regional cold storage. From the standpoint of budgeting, it is also to be remembered that a pill box doesn't need to be bound and rebound.

"As to cataloging cards of different types, it is now the publisher's business to provide them for new books or other records. For old records we have them telephotoed from the Library of Congress or one of the other central catalogs. When it comes to using the cards, I blush to think for how many years we watched the so-called business machines juggle with payrolls and bank books before it occurred to us that they might be adapted to dealing with library cards with equal dexterity. Indexing has become an entirely new art. The modern index is no longer bound up in the volume, but remains on cards, and the modern version of the old Hollerith machine will sort out and photograph anything that the dial tells it, and, thank heavens, will then put all the cards back in their places.

"We librarians must keep up with all these applications of science, and I admit it takes a fair share of our time to do so. If you had happened to start your new experiences at an A.L.A. convention, I'm afraid you wouldn't have recognized what was going on any more than you recognized this as a library building.

"You may remember how as youngsters we were fascinated with

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the scientific prophecies of H. G. Wells. Today Wells is still a living force as an interpreter of human nature, which doesn't change like the machines, but, as a scientific prophet, time has proved him to be what, if I remember correctly, we used to call a piker. I have only told you of the things that had their start back in 1937, because about these we both can use more or less the same language. As to the newer processes you will just have to take my say-so that they have come, and keep coming, and that you wouldn't know what I was talking about if I tried to explain them to you. If you were to attribute some of the results to a kind of harnessed and directed telepathy, you wouldn't be so far wrong. You realize, of course, that I've been skipping many other things, such as the whole question of protecting property rights in information which doesn't happen to be printed, and I've said nothing of the new demands of the new professions.

"But, after all, some things, and not the least important things for you to remember, haven't changed a bit in their fundamentals. For one thing, we'll never get a machine to select a book or other record, or to withdraw one from circulation. We'll never get a machine to establish the personal touch with the reader (we still call them all readers, by the way, whether their 'intake' is to be by sight or sound or touch). For another, the library is still the most generalized of the cultural services in any community, and now, as in 1937, the library must stand ready to fill in the gaps, whatever they may be, and to do so must adjust the proportionate scale of its different activities in terms of other agencies which may be available locally. For example, you see that man over there in what you called the physics laboratory. He is from one of the department stores and is matching colors by measuring the light vibrations. If this happened to be a college town, we would let the college look after things of that kind. On the other hand, we have here only a very small 'library' of illustrative models, because we do have a good museum which gives that kind of service better than we can. In fact, we keep only enough models to fix the idea in people's heads

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that for the modern library a model is a 'book,' if it happens to be the clearest and most economical way to get an idea into a human head."

By this time the Rippina Van Winkle of my musings would doubtless have found her voice again and resumed her questioning: "With all these things which people today must want to use, I should think the library would be crammed, but it seems to be rather empty."

"No, we have the usual number here today. Don't forget that in general the people come in to start a job; most of what goes on later goes on at home, or in the office, or the shop. The kind of equipment that you see here is very generally distributed, and, just as most of the book reading was done at home in the old days and is today, not only the books but the films and discs are now circulated by the library and used at home.

"By the way, you seem worried because so few of the people here seem to be reading. Curiously enough, we are delighted that there are so many; with all the other and apparently easier methods for conveying and absorbing information it looked for a while as if reading would become one of the lost arts, but within the last few years reading is coming into its own again, and the sector of the librarian's dollar which must go for the purchase of printed material is again growing larger."

"But, after all, mustn't the librarian today be a very different kind of person from the one I knew, really more of a mechanical engineer than a bookworm?"

"No, indeed, it hasn't proved necessary for a man or woman to neglect other things, or be a special kind of person in order to run these contraptions and keep them in order. Just think back and remember when automobiling and later aviation seemed destined to be limited as human activities to mechanically minded males."

"But still I don't see how any woman dares to become a librarian."

"Well, it doesn't require any more courage than it did to become

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a doctor in 1937, with all the new knowledge which had developed during the first third of the century and which seemed about to overwhelm the profession. It's always a question of hammering in the fundamentals and getting a sense of scale about the other things. Of course, we no longer pretend to train a college graduate to be a librarian in a year or two years, but, fortunately, the public now recognizes the value of our services to a point where the present salary scale justifies the longer preparation. But it isn't all a matter of the length of formal preliminary training. The work is much better organized, and we no longer waste time in learning the processes of yesterday. Furthermore, we librarians come much nearer today to practicing what we preach about adult education, and library boards have learned that it is not a bad investment to permit us to do a good bit of our practicing on company time."

At this point my old-timer might feel moved to point out that the really big change which had come to the profession was not in its mechanization but in a new division of intellectual labor. "In a very general way," she might say, "the information which a librarian may have to provide is of three types. At one end of the line is the general knowledge that any reasonably intelligent and trained librarian should have in his head or know just where to find. At the other end is the very highly specialized kind of information to be found perhaps in only one or two erudite brains in any generation. We don't bother possessors of such knowledge any more than we can help. If something in their line comes up, we first ask the Clearing House in Washington if our particular question has ever been asked before. If so, the answer is on record and immediately available; if not, the scholars are very reasonable about helping out. Last week we were in touch through the Interlingual Clearing House at Geneva with a biophysicist in Tirana and an anthropologist in Peking, both of whom were glad to give us what we needed.

"In between general knowledge and these highly specialized items comes the great mass of rather special knowledge which no li-

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brarian need pretend to cover, but which must be on tap either locally or regionally. Every librarian who is worth his salt makes it a point of pride to keep up with some specialty and, of course, to be ready to share what he knows with his colleagues. My own specialty happens to be synthetic textiles, and just before you came in I telephoned quite a little lecture on the subject to someone a hundred miles away on whom I shall probably never lay my eyes. One of the big jobs of the leaders in our profession in each region is to make sure that this kind of informal service is kept up. Mind you, the experts are not all active librarians. Professors and school teachers, engineers and lawyers, parsons and a surprising number of nonprofessional people do their bit as citizens in this way. It proves an admirable hobby for married ex-librarians."

"What a wonderful profession it must be, with all these marvelous new techniques for professional development, and all the chores eliminated."

"Chores, my dear, are never eliminated. I do think that today's chores are more interesting than the ones in the old days and that they take up a smaller proportion of my time, but chores there are and always will be, and by the same token there will always be bores to be served, and colleagues with toes to be trodden upon, though as to the latter I must add that what used to be called the personnel movement and the mental hygiene movement have done much all along the line to steer people into the jobs which, in view of their particular capacities and personalities, are the jobs they ought really to be in."

Well, Miss Van Winkle having been projected rocketlike into the future, all as a result of my talk with Alvin Johnson and the musings which followed that talk, let us leave her there, trusting she will adjust herself to a career of happy usefulness.

After all, the differences between 1937 and 1958, spectacular as they must prove to be, will I am sure be less significant than the likenesses. The library and the librarian have already found their

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place in human society and, by and large, despite innumerable changes in detail, that place won't be so very different twenty-one years hence. Librarianship is an essential profession, and a profession is a calling in which it is the broad human qualities which count, trained intelligence, imagination and initiative, disinterestedness and a sense of social responsibility—not techniques or tricks of the trade. The librarian, to be sure, will be freed from some of his present tasks, from the physical care of dead and dying books, with the attendant problems of binding and stacking, from a cumbersome system of records which I suspect is already out of date. He will also be freed from his present self-imposed task of evangelism, for it will be no more necessary twenty years hence to “sell” library service than it is today to sell postal service. For one thing, the youngsters who are now learning to be “librarians” in our children's rooms will then be largely in control of public opinion, and for another the steady reduction of classroom instruction in school and college, which has already set in, and the corresponding encouragement of individual acquisition of information, will mean that practically everyone then will have some knowledge of how to use a library.

The librarian by then should have completely lost that professional restlessness which is sometimes in evidence today, for, even though he himself may have no doubt that he is a member of a profession second in importance to none, he isn't always quite sure that the other fellow knows it too.

It is my expectation that as time goes on the librarian in our community councils will tend more and more to line up with the engineer and the accountant, as a purveyor of a background of facts, as contrasted with a foreground of hopes and fears. In community service, the library will continue to be the pinch hitter, in constant adjustment to changing needs and to new ways of meeting them, for the library today is sensitive to changes in the body politic and the body social, more immediately sensitive even than the school, and it seems destined to remain so. It may well be that

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librarians may have to give over to other professions as yet unborn some of the opportunities for professional service which today they regard as most precious; but, if so, they will acquire new opportunities to replace the ones transferred, and the relative position of the profession in the social pattern should not be very different. That position is high and honorable today, and it will be high and honorable in 1958.

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## *Responsibility of the Library to Continue the Literary Tradition*

BY HARRY MILLER LYDENBERG

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Just what is this "literary tradition" the library is responsible for?

Is it a championing of the belles-lettres against books with no more imagination than grammars or geographies? Is it a cherishing of the humanities against the sciences, pure or applied? Is it a supporting of the old poetry against the new? A holding up to scorn of histories that reflect any opinion of their author or swerve in the slightest from matter-of-fact narration? Does it mean the library's chief end is to collect books, letting their reading and use be governed by chance or the passing mood of the moment?

If you admit that the literary tradition, or the tradition of literature, means the connecting of book and reader, then I am sure we all agree that a literary tradition ever has been, ever will be, recognized by the librarian as his primary responsibility.

It is merely one more indication of the many-sided appeal of the book, of the responsiveness of the librarian to his setting, of his recognition of the charge given him to carry into the future the tradition of the past. How that tradition will be carried on, what form it will take, is merely a question of detail.

The photographic plate, the electric ray, radiation and other bewildering expressions of natural forces have lately come to play so



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striking a part in our daily life that one is tempted to ask not whether, but how, they are to affect this world of books.

Sixty or seventy centuries ago, before we helped our memory by making marks on cave walls, or clay tablets, or papyrus sheets, or skins of animals, the bard wandered through the country and told his story wherever he found a listener. Generations later some one tried to preserve these stories in material form. Then and there library and librarian came into play.

Is it fantastic to ask if broadcasting as we have it today may perhaps point to a time when once more the man with a story to tell may stand where he chooses and pour his tale into the air, to be taken up by willing ears, or other receiving sets? Perhaps when that time comes we may need no printed books, but be happy to rely either on the particular message we happen to choose from the throngs then in the air or on a reproduction of the author's voice from some mechanical device.

But until then we may count on printed books, shaped and formed in any way you choose to fancy, laid before their users in any way you choose to fancy, gathered, garnered, cataloged, arranged, classified by the librarian. From his earliest days the librarian has recognized his responsibility for preservation of this literary tradition, and so long as there are authors, books, readers, he may be counted on to carry that tradition forward.

It was a sense of that responsibility that led him to link himself to Mechanics Institutes and Chautauqua movements, to adult education and to Grange reading circles, to book wagons and library extension, to English for the foreign born, to joint efforts with the Junior League. But he has always played his tune on a single instrument—the book as the message of the author with a story to tell a thirsty world, whether the plea comes for poetry, history, philosophy, or science. The librarian has never felt that he had any other mission than to bring book and reader together, no matter what the interest of the one for the other.

Sometimes, however, your poet, dramatist, novelist, essayist—

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anyone offering what we like to call imaginative writing—announces that he alone produces “literature,” that “literary tradition” or the “tradition of literature” comes from him alone, that he must rise in protest whenever we talk about the “literature” of slang, or polar exploration, or horse breeding, or steel making. They say that books (mere books) may be written about such topics, to be sure, but these books are not literature, nor do their writers produce a literary tradition unless the bare bones of their facts are transmuted into glowing life by the creative imagination of the author.

Dreiser might use a textbook on steelmaking, but the steel story would be subordinated to the life story of the steel workers. Miss Cather uses the contemporary records of seventeenth century Quebec, chronicles, maps, letters and manuscripts, in creating *Shadows on the rock*. Mr. Stephen Vincent Benét undoubtedly assembled for *John Brown's body* facts accepted by all, but it was he who transformed those facts from the realm of history to imagination and emotion. It is not until those facts pass through the inspired artist that they swing into the field of literature.

Grant that and you will find librarians admitting readily enough that their connection with literature and the literary tradition is quantitatively smaller than with the unliterary tradition. Not that they shy away from “literature” or the “literary” tradition. Far from it. Simply that they have always felt, continue to feel, that their privilege, duty, responsibility lie in recognition of the wide-ness of appeal of the printed book, in their duty to fit together book and reader—all classes of each—wherever the two find themselves, rather than bow down to any particular class of books. And of recent years belles-lettres seem to some of us less active or less prolific in output than other fields of writing.

Fashions in books change almost as often and widely as in women's dress, and your library furnishes a striking proof if ever question arises. Go back only a little way and you find the emphasis largely on the producing, collecting, reading and serving of books theological. Sir Thomas Bodley wanted no papists on his

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shelves. The librarian was as partisan as his community. No one recognized impartiality. A book was either orthodox or heterodox; it was either supported or condemned. And so no one is surprised to see the dominance of theology and philosophy in the catalogs of libraries of earlier days, any more than he is surprised to see the usual classification schemes for books or for departments of knowledge open with those same topics.

No one expects the general library today to pay as much attention to those fields as it did in his grandfather's day. Everyone expects the general library in his grandson's day to be paying as much attention to the books in greatest demand at that time as it did for *his* grandfather or does for himself. The only thing we dare not expect is an accurate forecast of the direction, volume and velocity of the dominating current.

That certain trends will stand out clearly is so plain as to need no saying. It is equally clear that the librarian has to recognize them, adapt them to his needs as far as possible and adapt his course to their flow as far as possible.

How?

Well, for one thing he has taken the first step when he admits his responsibility. That implies a survey, a study of the landscape, a planning for the future. Plans have been much in our thoughts these last few years, five- and four- and ten-year plans, all sorts of plans. Sometimes they are formally recognized, sometimes acted on by instinct. It is decidedly encouraging to reflect that in this country the national association of libraries, with many of the state associations, has definitely set itself to the task of making such a survey, defining the steps the organization and its members should take to carry forward the resulting plans.

It was very definitely in recognition of a duty towards the literary tradition that, when the Library of Congress a generation ago began to print the cards for its catalog, it deposited sets of those cards in libraries at strategic points throughout the land where readers could find readily at hand records of what the national library

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contained. It was likewise a definite recognition of that same duty when that same library took the next step by gathering into its central stores a record of titles owned by other libraries, eventually to provide the student with a union catalog of the books at his command in one place or another throughout the land.

The naturalness of such efforts, the help they rendered productive scholarship and the possibilities for the future were so plain that today it is difficult to imagine oneself without such aid readily at hand. Recognition of this fundamental help for research came soon in efforts to establish similar union catalogs for various sections of the country. And in all these movements it was the American library that played its part in recognition of the literary tradition, in aiding American scholarship.

It has realized, too, that its responsibility includes not only the collecting of this kind of information but also the appraisal of the sources at hand. To this end a Board on the Resources of American Libraries has been appointed by the national association for study of the character and scope of the present collections, for consideration of means for helping the weaker members strengthen their holdings and encouraging the older and stronger ones to develop and round out their collections more nearly to completion.

The American library has done much toward this end by publication of lists of special collections. This helps the scholar at a distance from populous centers, aids the librarian in filling gaps in his collection, and indicates for this or that group of librarians which fields are for exclusive, which for joint, cultivation. Elimination of wasteful duplication, encouragement of sane and friendly rivalry, of cooperation rather than wasteful competition—such steps unquestionably help the American scholar, and demonstrate a sense of responsibility to the literary tradition.

Every now and then someone discovers a new age in library development. The past, we are told, was the time of the collector-librarian, the man whose chief aim in life was the gathering and assembling of books. The use they were put to was of incidental,

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trifling importance. The reader was welcome if a friend, suffered if an average man or rebuffed if occasion warranted or indigestion urged. But we have changed all that. It is the fashion, every now and then, to proclaim a new heaven and a new earth, a new gospel of carrying the book unto the uttermost parts of the earth, or of compelling the reader to come in. The old order gives place to the new, and the mere assembling of books is ranked among wind-mills, hand churns, horses, and similar forgotten things.

Here and there, however, can be found libraries that admit unashamedly in the open market-place that they still rejoice in rounding out their collections, that they still believe they have a charge to keep in assembling books with the needs of scholars in mind, that research demands materials to work on, that books are proper materials of research, that the character of readers is quite as significant a measure of their importance or value as the mere record of their numbers, that it is both possible and desirable to gather books to help scholars and at the same time provide books for the great body of citizenry.

It is fortunate that the two sides of library work are not mutually exclusive, and equally fortunate that the library may be counted on to continue its responsibility toward the literary tradition by gathering books as an aid to research. The scholarly side of its task can be met in satisfactory fashion with no lessening of the importance of the library as an element in the scheme of popular education. The growing recognition of the part the library plays in college and university life needs no comment. That it has lived up to its responsibilities toward the literary tradition so far offers ample reason for belief that its future course is equally certain.

But now, take the commission in its most literal form, and ask what responsibility the American library has to preserve the tradition of literature as we see it in what we ordinarily call books of imagination, in the humanities, in the deeper and exclusive sense of the term.

Has it any duty in this respect? What tradition is there to be

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preserved? If the library fails who will carry on? Is any one else in better position?

Librarians generally have recognized that they have certain plain and obvious duties in this field. Their judgment as to what is now great literature is as fallible as their brothers'. No one can blame them for looking at *Two years before the mast* in 1840 or *Moby Dick* in 1851 as run-of-mine books, one more or less imaginative, the other as matter-of-fact as a countinghouse ledger. The appreciative soul who, when those books appeared, saw that they would some day be accepted as milestones must later have been properly pleased with himself.

Undoubtedly Melvilles and Danas are writing today, with as little appreciation as before, and all we can hope for is recognition by the occasional mind, blessed with enough imagination and penetration. The problem is simpler with the obviously weak, sentimental romances certain to make their crop year after year, certain of wide appeal, certain of no life beyond today. There the course is plain. Plenty of books, equally strong in sentimental appeal, unquestionably superior in permanent value, lie at the command of librarian and reader. All the librarian needs is money to buy enough copies to keep his readers in a literary tradition tested by time and proved by general accord, and to buy liberally such books currently appearing as he honestly feels have good chances of proving to be pure gold. (He knows he will overlook some and will hold up others that will not last in the long run, but his errors will be honest errors of judgment, not of wilfully singing the praises of the mediocre, the vicious, the weak or the poor.)

The moment he starts on any such path, however, he opens himself to two charges. Why, with a public library supported by public money, should not the public get what the public wants? What right has he to set himself up as a censor?

The public hospital ought to give the public laudanum as a cure-all when the public demands it? Physicians make mistakes in diagnosis or prescription, to be sure, and librarians have plenty

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of errors charged up against them. But both have ideals and convictions, willingly changed when proved wrong but firmly held until that time arrives. Your librarian knows the universal demand, "Tell us a story," can be met by books with a lasting thrill and the added assurance of being good company. It is his duty and responsibility to help the public taste and test this literary tradition.

Some of us, to be sure, say we are tired of respectable society, want the fun of playing with a shady crowd now and then if not every hour of every day. Very well, that's our own choice. But is it the duty of the public library to furnish such a diversion?

No need for long talk on that point. No, nor on the other, which goes on to say that when the public established a library it did not establish a *censor morum*.

Agreed, without debate.

But when your librarian refuses to buy this, that, or the other title, he's setting himself up as just that kind of a judge of other people's reading, isn't he?

Not at all. Nor is it begging the question to say that life is just one series of selections, day after day and hour after hour, and when your librarian chooses what he honestly believes is a better piece of literature than another he is merely exercising that kind of selection demanded by the position he holds.

He makes mistakes, plenty of them, and he changes his point of view as the years change. Some of us recall when *Tom Jones* was shut out of libraries, and what a grave question it was whether *Tess* should be admitted. Zola, of course, found many doors closed. But how about *Three weeks*?

Yes, it's true that the librarian knows some of the things he passes over today will be no more questioned tomorrow than are *Tom* and *Tess*. For some he may count on the support of time.

But the point is simply that the librarian admits he makes mistakes, asks nothing more than that he be given a fair show when he tries to serve his readers with what he believes are the best examples of the literary tradition. A book may be a great book if it

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reeks with profanity on every page, if in every other paragraph it sings lustily the ballads of things that normal people ordinarily accept without talking about, but it is great in spite of those offenses against good taste, not because of them. The librarian asks the privilege of accepting or rejecting on the basis of merit as literature, on the way the book measures up to literary tradition, on that alone, not on its profanity or pornography.

Your proletarian novel or your sea story may be a piece of real literature, but it ranks so because it tells a great story, creates real characters, paints a picture you can't forget, not because it is a tract for the times with scene laid in slums or fo'c'sle. It may be accepted as a plea for more humanity to man, but that alone is not a password to the ranks of literature.

(And here let me say I realize that the airy lightness of suggestion and suggestiveness may be solely in my mind and intent, not in the words set down. To escape the danger of misunderstanding let me say with clumsy and direct plainness that I am speaking with no particular proletarian or "other half" novel or sea story in mind, citing them merely as Tendenz examples. All I want to do is to make the obvious remark that *Uncle Tom's cabin*, and *The jungle*, and *Nicholas Nickleby* were once thrilling documents in social movements. As milestones in English literature, however, their position must be fixed according to the degree they measure up to the canons or standards of the novel as an expression of literature, not as to their effectiveness as a clarion call to reform.)

It is in this sense that the librarian must recognize and live up to his responsibility to the literary tradition. The treasures of the past have been given him to care for. He is willing—nay, eager—to find, to cherish, to applaud the creations of today. That the task is less simple to accomplish than to define is no reason for avoidance. Every sign gives assurance that complete recognition for tomorrow is as certain as for yesterday.

In conclusion, I feel I can do no better than quote the words of a friend to whom I was talking recently on this subject:



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"The literary tradition implies the conserving, the transmitting from one generation to another of imaginative, critical, philosophical letters. The factual books are in the main the books of the day, even the great ones—Caesar, Pliny, Herodotus (or does he go to fiction?), Locke, Johnson's *Dictionary*, Newton, Darwin—being assimilated in the great body of scientific and factual material. Cherished for their historical interest, they are unreliable today as statements of fact. Where would later scientists, military strategists, lexicographers, economists be if they relied solely on these predecessors?

"But Plato, Euripides, Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Goethe, Voltaire, Blake, Shelley—countless others—are as forceful and moving today as when they were brightly minted. No one replaces them. No one can. No improvements can be made. Time does not affect their influence.

"Therefore the library has a peculiar obligation to cherish and transmit their work. Even with less exalted writers of imaginative literature it is the privilege of the library to make them more widely known than they would otherwise be, to extend to its readers their illumination of life and to transmit them to the next generation of library users."

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# *Libraries—*

## *The Stronghold of Freedom*

BY DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

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THE ONE true library pioneer whom I knew intimately was my father. He was an educator who preached a crusade for universal free public education long before that principle was taken for granted. When the movement was well started and would obviously go forward of its own impetus, he began another crusade—for universal free public libraries. These he saw as the needed rung in the educational ladder before the American citizenry could step off into that permanent intellectual maturity without which the hopes of the country's founders would come to nothing. What was the use of teaching Americans to read intelligently if they did not find around them an adequate supply of intelligently selected books to read?

My father and other generous-spirited library pioneers of his generation never doubted that with books and readers brought together the trick was done. But there have been times when I have been glad they were in their graves and not with me as I have looked, shocked, at the echoing emptiness of certain well-stocked but neglected libraries. My father's wholehearted drive towards providing books might have lost some of the power of his ardor and courage had he guessed what nobody then knew—that there

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are mysterious, shut doors inside human heads which must be opened before the right books are taken from those open shelves and read. How could the pioneers of the library movement dream of the invisible barrier which rears itself inexplicably between the busy, happy reading-public of childhood, clustering in well-conducted children's rooms, reading children's classics with delight, and those children grown up to be the general public, who read no classics, none, nothing but an occasional best seller, and the magazines?

But John Brown's soul is not the only one that goes marching on. All generous-hearted, selfless lovers of the common good leave behind them something that will not die, that lives and, because it lives, adapts itself to what it finds to do in its own time. Although it is always a shock for people to see as they grow older that no problem is as simple as it looked to the first of those who attacked it, we all come to feel, as we advance into being the older generation ourselves, that nothing of what the pioneers have done is wasted, and that their spirit lives on, indomitably continuing to battle for the good cause, against difficulties of which they did not dream.

They thought—or no, they did not think, they took for granted—that an “educated citizenry” (by this, they simpleheartedly meant a population all of whom had gone through the primary grades, a large majority of whom had high school training, a large minority of whom had a college diploma) would spontaneously and eagerly throng into the public library in knowledge-hungry crowds, if the doors could be opened to them, using books as tools to advance themselves steadily year by year in good taste, cultivation, good judgment, sound information. There is no doubt that they would be aghast to see that this is not exactly what happens—to put it mildly. They would be horrified by the statistics showing the large percentage of our population which cannot read with ease, and will not of its own accord read any book beyond the comprehension of an eighth grade child (or is it a sixth grade one?). They would be staggered by the small proportion of the population of any com-

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munity which uses the books so freely offered by its public libraries. Doesn't the American Library Association give five to ten books a year per capita of the population as about the best circulation a public library can hope for, under the most favorable conditions?

And what is it we hear from colleges about the apparently congenital illiteracy of many students entering the freshman class? Yes, I think the forefathers of the free public library would have turned rather pale at some of the things we know, and they did not, about the relationship between books and human beings.

But, remembering their ardor, their willingness to give their lives to the cause, I do not for a moment believe they would be disheartened. I am sure that after they had had time just to catch their breath they would have turned from their crusade for a wider public recognition of the vital need for books in a democracy, to an impassioned attack on the mystery of why a democracy doesn't use its books as it should. They were determined, you'll remember, to open to their countrymen those doors to knowledge, understanding and joy, called books. When they saw that opening the literal material doors to public libraries did not bring inside that rich realm great numbers of those who would profit by it and, profiting, would raise the level of their country's life, I don't think they would have sat down on the front steps to mourn. I think they would have asked themselves purposefully, "What are the doors that are still shut?"

That is what their successors in the library world of today are asking themselves. The new crusaders for books in a democracy have turned from the material to the inner obstacles, and in long detailed research are trying to forge the keys that will open those psychological doors. I feel a reflection from the ardor of the pioneers whenever I am reminded of the existence of that Committee on Readability in Books, with its double connection with the American Library Association and with the American Association for Adult Education. Miss Flexner with her Readers Advisory Service is not only guiding hundreds of readers but storing up

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priceless heaps of information about the inner workings of readers' minds. Lyman Bryson with his pioneering and experimental research into what may be the causes, in style, in presentation, in construction of books, for their having so few readers (relative to our population), is feeling his way forward into an unexplored region of the mind, the vastness of which, the possibilities of which, fairly take one's breath away. Dr. Waples' painstaking piling up of factual, actual information about what the people of modern literate countries do read—how strange that it is only since he began that we have seen the necessity of knowing something about what the situation is, before we try to improve it. And in the schools, the new interest in reading, the specializing experts, the constant discussion of causes of failure, the constant analysis of results—how hopeful and promising for the librarians of the future and for our democracy are the pedagogical battles over the methods of teaching reading. Every one of them is part of the crusade to open doors through which a democracy must pass if it is to endure. I think the spirits of the pioneers must hover with affection and pride over their descendants who are attacking the problem from this angle.

It is possible, too, that those hovering spirits from their point of vantage may lift their eyes from the struggles of our generation as we try to carry on their crusade to bring wisdom and beauty of the past into the present, and may see, rank on rank, other doors now shut which may open before the widened imagination of the future. They may be between laughter and pity to see how we narrow our efforts to bridge the chasm between the past and the present, thinking of the printed page as though it were the only way in which the collective wisdom of our race may be preserved and carried forward. They may see that the great door of audible books has been unlocked by scientific research and by the success of the cinema and be asking us why in the world we don't push it open and invite into the library of the future those minds, not moving freely on the printed page, which have been shut out from normal growth in the past few centuries. And those other myriads of

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human minds which love and understand and grow through pictures rather than words—for five hundred years the printing press, straddling like Apollyon over all the way, has darkly forbidden them to advance into knowledge and understanding, starving and warping by its pretensions some of the richest personalities of our race—"go to their rescue!" we can imagine the spirits of our library pioneers crying out to us. Cautioning us to continue straitly and well that learned laboratory research, the first ever undertaken in the history of the world, into the real relation between human minds and books, which is our generation's special pioneer work of exploration, they are perhaps also bidding us give up as vain the effort to get *all* the brains of the race into the heaven of intellectual life through the needle's eye of the printed page, and telling us that the gates leading to intelligence and culture are wider than that.

Rising with a strong wingbeat of the imagination, they may catch a glimpse of libraries of the future circulating not only those sheets of paper marked with printed symbols of words which so large a part of our race translate with difficulty into ideas, but paintings, music (why not?), records of poems read by the poets themselves, motion-picture films of far places, of mechanical processes hard to put into these word symbols, of the stars in their courses, of instruction in sports and dancing, in hygiene, in homemaking, in the care of children, in gardening, in all the arts.

Yet there is an aspect of the library movement now, in our troubled times, rising melodramatically into view, undreamed of, I think, by its founders, with all their greatness of vision. They took for granted some forms of freedom, assumed that liberty to think was as pervasive in modern life as the air we breathe. And we have been tragically taught that this freedom is the first object of attack whenever democracy is threatened. Highly as the founders valued the institution of public libraries (they would have said that it was impossible to set a higher value on that institution than they did), it did not occur to them, I think, that public libraries play a

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vital part in preserving that intellectual freedom without which any form of government is a blighting tyranny. It was only in the lurid light from the book-burning *autos-da-fé* in Germany, that the library took on its true shape of protecting fortress, that we saw it as the very stronghold of freedom. Since then few of our generation can pass a public library—from the humblest village collection of books to the grandest white marble urban palace—without a lift of the heart, both in thankfulness that it is there and in determination to do our share in preserving the shelter it gives to the living seeds of intellectual life.

Our fathers' generation thought naïvely, and so did we in our youth, that the insane wish to burn and crush and destroy those irreplaceable seeds was a forgotten wickedness of the unenlightened dark centuries far behind us. The revelation which comes to us in our late maturity and to our younger generation as they first emerge into adult life, that intellectual freedom is above every other element in human life marked down for savage destruction by the totalitarian state, gives us an electrifying warning to look well to the defenses of our libraries. They are far more than the founders thought, far more even than rich treasure houses of taste, beauty, enjoyment and abstract scientific information—they are in the last analysis, as the monastic libraries of the Dark Ages proved, the vessels in which the seed corn for the future is stored.

All but the most primitive of savages have wit enough to protect the supply of grain for the next year's sowing. The same kind of elemental instinct sends us to stand guard over our libraries as never before, watchful not only of open and avowed frontal attacks, but of subterranean mining, and of siege by slow starvation. They are, as we never realized, far more than schools (helpless before bullying propaganda as schools are), the very core and heart of the defense against the return to barbarism. "Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying" floats in invisible glory over our public libraries.

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# *National Leadership from Washington*

BY CARLETON B. JOECKEL  
AND WILLARD O. MISHOFF

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TO MANY PEOPLE, unfamiliar with the administrative history of our federal government, national library leadership may appear as a relatively new obligation, associated with political trends of recent years and partisan advocates of centralized political authority. Although the Constitution of the United States makes no direct provision for libraries, the national government for many years has shown a definite interest in library organization and administration. It not only has developed its own special and technical libraries in the various agencies, but it has also rendered services promoting the welfare of libraries throughout the nation. Since the future relationship of the national government to American libraries will be determined largely by its current activities, these may be examined briefly in order that their implications for leadership may be understood.

The library interests of the United States government may be grouped conveniently in four well-defined classes: (1) exemptions and privileges; (2) services in the national capital; (3) field activities outside the District of Columbia; and (4) the Library Service Division of the Office of Education.



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The federal statutes allow American libraries exemptions and privileges. Thus, libraries are exempt from certain import duties and from postal charges for shipments of books designed for the blind. Equally significant is the designation of the Library of Congress as legal depository for material copyrighted in the United States.

As the activities of the federal government have increased, libraries have been established in various branches located in Washington. Outstanding examples are the collections of the Army Medical Library, Department of Agriculture, Smithsonian Institution, Geological Survey, Patent Office, Bureau of Standards, and Office of Education. So extensive and deeply imbedded in the administrative structure is the complex library system that its resources and organization are easily overlooked. Despite the inconspicuousness of their services, however, these federal libraries exceed in content and variety the governmental libraries of other nations. The Library of Congress, an independent administrative unit, is now the largest library in the world and may be regarded rather as a group of important special libraries than as a single collection. The National Archives comprises a recent establishment in an allied field. The special objectives and diverse sources of income of these libraries render difficult the coordination of their services.

In addition to governmental activities, many federal libraries offer assistance to research workers and students. Equally important are the technical devices available to other libraries in the form of printed cards, depository and union catalogs, classification schedules, and microfilms. Incomplete as these services may be, due to inadequate financial support and inherent technical intricacies, without them the libraries of the nation would be unable to catalog their collections proficiently and with economy. The interlibrary loan services extended to scholars are both convenient and significant.

Government libraries issue at more or less regular intervals a growing list of current bibliographies, indexes, and digests in va-

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rious fields. Moreover, the cataloging and indexing of both state and federal documents has become a definite responsibility of the national government. There remains a need to broaden the range of state document indexes and to analyze more completely the mass of near-print documents issued by many public agencies. An exchange of documents with foreign governments is carried on by the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution.

Of more popular interest is the distribution of public documents published under the auspices of various governmental units. For many years the federal government has been more than generous in its issue of public print to libraries. As a result, it has been accused—justly—of extravagance on the one hand and of parsimony on the other. There have been unsuitable inclusions of small libraries in the list of depositories, and strange omissions of large libraries. Recent legislation has liberalized provisions for the distribution of congressional journals and committee publications to depository libraries.

Outside the District of Columbia, federal library service has assumed varying degrees of organization. The territories and dependencies maintain public libraries according to local initiative and ability. While organized book service is rendered in the Virgin Islands, and libraries are scattered throughout Alaska and Puerto Rico, the most effective system is maintained in Hawaii. Surveys of territorial needs would make possible the formulation of a comprehensive library policy in these outlying domains. In the national parks, appropriate reading materials are regarded as essential to the educational and recreational program of the National Park Service. Throughout the country, the federal government makes available to blind readers embossed books and talking books, which are distributed through libraries in regional centers. These federal grants in the form of books assist materially in this service, which already exemplifies the intelligent cooperation of national, state and local authorities.

Wards of the federal government are permitted various grades

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and types of book service. A well-organized library system is maintained in the leading prisons by a professional staff, while the hospitals and facilities generally provide for the distribution of reading material. Much less is done for the reservation Indians, who must depend upon the schools for book service to adults as well as to children. Although the postwar educational program of the army and navy included the establishment of libraries, relatively less emphasis has been placed on library service in recent years. Army libraries are now administered through a decentralized corps area program, and nowhere is there more need for planning and strengthening of service.

Camp and traveling libraries comprise a regular part of the educational program of the Civilian Conservation Corps, and their use is encouraging. Despite the emergency origin of the Corps, its continuance in some form seems assured and a permanent library policy merits consideration. First, there is urgent need for attachment to the Corps in each area of competent library advisers in order to eliminate inequalities of service and to secure an effective level of library performance. Secondly, the Corps itself should assume responsibility for a minimum standard of library service. While many units may continue to receive reading matter from local libraries, the migratory nature of the camps places the major responsibility for book service upon the federal government.

One of the most extensive field organizations of the national government is the Tennessee Valley Authority, which is concerned with the watershed problems jointly affecting federal, state and local jurisdictions. In addition to technical library service to employees, reading materials for adults and children have been provided through the educational program, thereby eliminating a traditional gulf between libraries and schools. In several areas co-operative arrangements have proved successful with local libraries, state library agencies, state educational authorities, the Works Progress Administration, and the National Youth Administration. Federal funds are thus made available for library planning and

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experimentation in regional cooperation under the immediate stimulus of an educational program.

Libraries shared to some extent in the federal emergency program, and their activities were not only of current importance, but also of significance for the future. Since the main objective was to provide employment—an obvious handicap to efficiency—the accomplishments of relief workers deserve respectful consideration. These workers carried on, with considerable success, routine and clerical, binding and repair, classification and cataloging projects under professional supervision. In some cases activities included the collection and organization of local data for future research. An impressive achievement of the Works Progress Administration was the extension of library service to about 2,000,000 residents of localities hitherto unserved. In these districts new patterns of organization and administrative areas were used, with a definite trend toward county or regional units. These federal projects in some instances resulted in the continuation of library service through local appropriations. In general the emergency program yielded important additions to the scope of library service which should be preserved and made efficient.

The establishment of a Library Service Division in the Office of Education places a new emphasis upon a hitherto minor phase of federal educational activity. Three types of functions are contemplated for this agency, namely: (1) fact finding and research; (2) fostering interlibrary cooperation; and (3) promoting library service in general, with freedom for experiment. One of the most obvious possibilities lies in the regular collection and publication by the agency of complete and accurate library statistics through cooperation with state library authorities and the American Library Association. The Library Service Division exemplifies the common interest of schools and libraries, and its strategic location should facilitate its relationship with all aspects of American education.

The library implications of the program for federal aid to education are important. The agricultural extension service, in both its

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educational and recreational phases, requires adequate reading materials and efficient local library service. Similar needs appear in the federally subsidized system of vocational education in agriculture, home economics, industry, and trade. Since the specialized demands of this program are not always adequately served by local resources, the pressing demand for vocational efficiency will compel libraries to cooperate actively with neighboring federal projects. Opportunities for the distribution of reading matter arise in connection with the forum projects of the Office of Education. Here books and pamphlets are required in effective quantities, and competent library staffs are needed to serve local discussion groups. Finally, the adult education program carried on in connection with rural rehabilitation and colonization presents unusual opportunities for cooperation between local, state, and federal agencies in book service to farmers too handicapped to be reached by the agricultural extension program.

The federal library policy of the near future should rest upon three major issues: (1) What changes, if any, should be made in the organization and functions of governmental libraries? (2) Should the national government enter the field of regional library service in the leading geographic areas of the United States? (3) Should federal grants-in-aid be made to libraries, and, if so, in what amounts?

The administrative organization of the governmental libraries needs revision. In the first place, a federal library council might be established to coordinate efficiently the work of these libraries. This body would resemble the National Archives Council and would be consulted in the formulation of policies of subject interest, book selection, technical routines, administration, and consolidation of functions. The council might consist of federal representatives appointed by the President, the chairman presumably being the Librarian of Congress. Through a full-time secretary, a small staff and regular meetings, the council could maintain close relations with the National Resources Committee and the Bureau of the

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Budget, to insure intelligent correlation of library objectives with national planning.

Secondly, the technical services of the Library of Congress should be improved and expanded at federal expense to approach their greatest usefulness to American libraries. The distribution of printed catalog cards should be hastened and more entries for scholarly titles should be made available. Even if such cooperative activity were to entail a loss, the total cost of cataloging to libraries throughout the nation would be greatly diminished. The Union Catalog should be expanded more rapidly through microfilming and other modern techniques. A comparatively slight increase in the budget of the Library of Congress would result in greater efficiency among American libraries, to say nothing of economies in cataloging.

Thirdly, a national bibliographic center might be established at the Library of Congress, serving as headquarters for information upon the holdings of American libraries and as a clearing house for interlibrary loans in scholarly or scientific fields. Since centralization of such information is important, the national library would provide the most appropriate location. This bibliographic center would organize formally the services now rendered to scholars by the Library of Congress, and would become the proper agency to index the special collections among libraries in the United States. This type of service is already carried on in several national libraries abroad.

In the fourth place, the present system of document distribution is in pressing need of revision. The methods and results of this important activity might well be surveyed by the Superintendent of Documents in cooperation with the American Library Association, prior to recommendations for legislative changes. Waste could be eliminated, and at the same time a more liberal distribution of needed items achieved, by the careful selection of depositories, with reference to regional importance, adequate personnel, and potential usefulness.

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Fifth, the Library Service Division in the Office of Education might be given status and financial support commensurate with its importance as the national headquarters for library affairs. The personnel should be increased to provide specialists in each major type of library activity. There are important opportunities for service through the integration of regional statistics and reports, experimentation in various types of library service, and the promotion of interstate cooperation. To facilitate these activities, the advancement of the library agency to bureau status in the government merits serious consideration.

Finally, the federal government, through appropriate agencies, should endeavor to formulate a consistent and coherent policy for book service in all its jurisdictions. Since it is directly responsible for library service in its field facilities, territories, and dependencies, closer attention might well be given to the book needs of the Indian Service, the National Park Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps, thereby approximating the high quality of library service developed by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

A significant opportunity for national library leadership appears in the establishment of regional library systems. By means of grants-in-aid and book services from its own libraries, the government might promote the development of regional centers and a general program of cooperation which would coordinate library resources on a national scale. Studies of the National Resources Committee and federal emergency projects have brought forward the general problem of regionalism. In the library field, the federal government alone is able to provide competent, authoritative and planned direction with adequate funds to prevent confusion and duplication of effort.

The establishment of a national system of regional libraries should be an evolutionary process in which each step would be studied carefully. As a preliminary, regional information centers might be established with union catalogs, reference materials, and interlibrary loan services closely integrated with similar tools of the

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Library of Congress. These centers could be housed in the important library of each region by agreement between local and federal authorities. Tested experience and surveys of existing book needs might eventually expand these information centers into libraries. Such surveys could be directed by the Librarian of Congress, who might be advised by an adequately financed national library resources board, consisting of librarians appointed by the President to represent each major geographical area. The work of this board should be closely affiliated with that of the National Resources Committee.

The question of federal grants-in-aid to libraries has assumed practical significance since the report of the President's Advisory Committee on Education and the suggested appropriation by Congress for rural library service as part of the national educational program. Cultural and economic arguments favoring permanent federal subsidies for education apply with equal force to libraries. The library's potential contribution to public welfare in a democracy is unlimited, and popular education is obviously the concern of nation and states alike. Reading materials should be available to all citizens with a reasonable measure of equality. Since nearly one half the number of books read in the United States comes from public libraries, it is apparent that the library already is a major factor in adult education. It is also true that students comprise a large proportion of public library readers. Without equitable distribution of the book resources of the nation, efforts to remove illiteracy and to extend formal schooling are pointless.

The wide variation in economic conditions among the states is reflected in similar inequality of library service. States of relatively greater wealth in general spend more for libraries. Library expenditures are likewise directly proportional to density of population, so that book service is lacking in sparsely settled areas where the need is greatest. The poverty of certain states, notably in the South, accounts for the fact that only a small surplus remains in the public budget after the primary functions of government have been



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financed. Here depreciated books, buildings, and equipment prevent adequate book service, and local or state funds are insufficient for rehabilitation. Thus the present economic diversity in the United States points strongly toward federal aid if a nationwide minimum standard of library service is to be maintained.

Federal grants-in-aid may be used to promote a broad program of library extension and improvement, including public and school libraries, those in institutions of higher learning, demonstration and experimental library projects, and library buildings. Since the public library derives its income usually from the local government, it is likely not to share in any subsidy for education unless it is so specified. The pressing need for school libraries warrants the generous expenditure of federal funds for books, equipment, and administration. Demonstration and experimental projects should be carried on jointly by federal and state library agencies. Progress in a library building program will be greatly stimulated by substantial contributions from national funds.

Federal subsidies should be used to make up any deficiency in state and local appropriations, in order to maintain a national minimum standard of library service, generally thought of as possible on a dollar-per-capita basis. The major portion of such grants should be derived from an equalization formula based upon the inverse ratio of taxpaying ability in each state to total national taxpaying ability. Other grants might be stimulative, calculated on a percentage of current state and local appropriations for library purposes. Special difficulties and costs peculiar to rural areas may justify additional per capita grants for library service in those regions. Under any circumstances, the ideal of a nationally adequate standard of library service can be approached only through the united action of local, state, and federal governments.

The actual distribution of federal aid may well observe certain principles. Administrative control of library service should remain with state and local units of government. Since federal supervision of subsidies is well established, however, library grants will prob-

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ably warrant no exception to this policy. There is little to fear and much to gain from reasonable federal supervision, as its purpose is to guarantee proper use of funds. To this end, the Library Service Division of the Office of Education should not only assist in the development of state plans prerequisite to federal aid, but also should exercise sufficient supervision to insure the efficient use of government money. Cooperative planning will result in more effective state library agencies, better interlibrary cooperation, larger units of service, and higher personnel standards. Annual state reports and federal audits of expenditures constitute reasonable security for the proper use of federal funds.

Summarizing the problem of national library leadership, one can distinguish a number of fundamentals underlying a federal library policy. First, the federal government should not only synthesize and correlate its own library functions, but might well expand its technical and bibliographical services to the limit of their usefulness. Secondly, the Office of Education, through its library agency, should take an active part in the development of nationwide library service. Thirdly, the national government should cooperate in plans for regional library systems and should make a prompt decision as to its policy. Fourth, federal aid is essential to attain a nationwide minimum standard of library service. Finally, the cooperation of local, state, and federal governments will be necessary in order to approach the ideal of nationally adequate book service. The character of national library leadership will depend upon its share in the responsibility.

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## *Ideal Library Support*

BY MILTON J. FERGUSON

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BETWEEN the conservative right wing of the old subscription library, in which the pay-as-you-enter plan prevailed, and the modern left wing, which expects to "get it from Washington," there ought to be an ideal method of supporting a public library. But it is scarcely the question alone of getting the money necessary for a satisfactory service. It is conceivable that some well-intentioned philanthropist might leave the funds to keep a public library up to the highest standards of efficiency, and that that library might even then fall short of the results so desirable in this service. There can be no question, in other words, that man is so peculiarly formed as to benefit from the blows he receives over the head, while he grows soft and flabby under caresses. And, it has been said, man values what he pays for. Therefore, if the public library hopes to prove a true benefit it must use its utmost endeavor to operate in a wholesomely stimulating manner.

What are the objections to the subscription library? As an institution it cannot be wholly bad. Traces of this once flourishing cultural center are still clear, across the continent—the New York Society Library, the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association, the San Francisco Mechanics Institute Library are examples of the sort of thing I mean. They buy books in generous quantity; readers get

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the volumes they want while they still want them. And even on busy days their reading rooms do not remotely resemble a mid-town subway station at the rush hour. They are, in fact, more like clubs, where inspiration for reading and study abounds. The catch? It costs five dollars a year, or some such sum, to belong. It is just conceivable that we public librarians are placing the emphasis in the wrong place. If the subscription library offers such advantages, why do we not devise schemes by which the moneyless may earn that five dollars? A good argument could be made for the benefit the individual would thereby experience. Think of the satisfaction the boy or girl would feel in working for the money which would then buy such treasure! But perhaps the day has passed; the subscription library is for the comparative few who have the price. One can arouse some enthusiasm, however, for such a Captain-John-Smith kind of philosophy: let him who would read books first earn his subscription. Maybe the method is too ideal; and we are merely looking for the practical ideal.

A word will not be amiss concerning some of the principles underlying the support of public libraries in the several states. Did I say principles? My error; I should have emphasized their lack, rather than their existence. Some early draftsman of library measures tried to do the problem on the millage basis; and most of his kind, lacking knowledge or inspiration, have followed his lead. There is little point in providing a quarter-mill or a two-mill tax for library purposes. Why nobody had a revelation which would show him that the basis of such a service is the reader or the resident, and not the mill, a crystal gazer alone could answer. In many parts of the nation where a small tax would raise little money, the readers are numerous, and their capacity to pay, limited. And yet the plan now generally followed is to levy a library tax from the standpoint of property, or money, not from that of readers to be served. Business would have to close its doors if it tried such methods. Cannot librarians learn something from the restaurateur and the proprietor of the department store? The latter know that a

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certain patronage may be expected from each thousand unit of the population; and they are prepared with meals, or shoes, or whatever, to meet that demand. Whoever finally pays the library score, we may be fairly certain that the ideal plan of support will not be found on the millage basis alone. An attempt has been made, in a few instances, to get the correct answer by empowering the library board to fix the tax. If we grant that the library authority is well-advised and liberal—some of us librarians are rather too careful of the pennies—the levy could be sensibly fixed. The trouble is that this method is poor public economy; one board or authority should be charged with the responsibility, the credit or the blame, for governmental expenses. I wonder the local statesmen have not been willing to leave the library tax to the library board, thus scattering the responsibility for the assessment; but it is not so.

A factor which must have marked influence on the financial side of library service is the unit of operation. There was a time when songs, punctuated with enthusiastic "Glory, Hallelujahs," were written by the advocates of "a library in every town." And again there were those who would do the job from a state center, firing packages of books at distant readers with the accuracy of a modern artilleryman pouring shells into a skyscraper city. Both, as we now view the problem, were wrong. The first group cannot provide a sufficient stream of books to keep the current moving in an interesting manner; and the second is a type of blind flyer without instruments of precision—if they hit the landing field once, out of the favorite box of 50 volumes, nobody need be elated. Accidents are still accidents. Libraries which do not provide a competent staff and an adequate supply of books are failures; and the higher the per capita charge, the greater the failure. The last few decades have demonstrated that the small town unit is quite as futile as the state unit. Somewhere between, for reader satisfaction and for taxpayer consent, lies the golden mean which will prove ideal from more than one point of view.

One other school of library thinker has arisen, as a cloud on the

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horizon, in these late days of economic unhappiness. Its exponent looks to some far-off generous Santa Claus, who plucks bank notes from the thin air and stuffs them into the coffers of town, county and state. Thereafter, nothing need disturb local serenity: repayment is not a local irritant. Oh yes, he is honest and sincere, and very human: who among us doubts the existence of fairies or underestimates their powers? As an example of this philosophy let us turn to the *Report of the Second triennial general meeting of the South African Library Association*, which was held in Bloemfontein in October, 1936. The Mayor of that pleasant city heartily welcomed the visitors, saying some of those agreeable things which friendly municipal officials utter regarding the merits of their local library staff.

His Honor, the Mayor, impressed upon his hearers the important fact that the municipal authority was deeply conscious of physical and recreational needs of the people, that, in fact, for playgrounds, parks, and sports fields an annual expenditure of £5,000 was being made. Toward the maintenance of the public library the sum of £1,150 was appropriated for the current year. The Mayor, however, seemed alarmed with the proposal which came from Johannesburg that all public libraries of the Union should, like its own, be "a charge on the rates." His address closed thus:

"I am not going to argue against a free library, but it should not be charged against the rates of a town. But we all benefit and should bear the cost. Therefore a library, Mr. President, should be charged against the National Government of the country, not against a section of your people, those who have invested in bricks and mortar."

South Africa is far away—the sentiment is nearer home—and the system of government down there may give force to an argument which does not seem convincing to us. There may be a difference between providing sports fields and public libraries at local expense. His Honor, the Mayor, quite reasonably may be compelled to speak against excellent services for the citizens merely because the tax burden will thereby be increased. Convictions of the mother coun-

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try transplanted to the colonies probably change with slower pace than do those same ideas back home. It is not surprising, therefore, to find South Africa adopting free libraries, "charged against local rates," with the greatest deliberation. A little help comes from the local government, a little less sometimes from province or nation, but in South Africa the main dependence for public libraries still rests upon the subscriber. The advantages to the user who pays his own way are clear; but unfortunately this system means the limitation of libraries to a small part of the public.

We librarians are prone to compare our system to the public schools. We maintain, and rather reasonably, I think, that despite our informality, our lack of grade books, classes and diplomas, we nevertheless do have a cultural influence on the persons who frequent our house. The state, of the type developed under new world conditions, is sure that the greater the average intelligence of its people, the more likely is its form of government to endure. If it can be shown that the public library is a kind of school capable of touching the lives and the thoughts of its clientele, not only for a few of the years of immaturity, but from childhood to old age, there would be reason in expecting the state to do its share in maintaining such a system. The expense of the public schools, in New York, for example, is borne by the local unit and the state on approximately a one-third to two-thirds basis. In most other states in the Union some similar division of the school budget is made. On the other hand, New York, again as an example, grants public libraries a mere tip-like pittance: namely, \$100 per year for each library or branch—the money to be spent for books approved by the Regents of the University of the State of New York. While to most libraries \$100 is \$100, and the books bought therewith welcome additions to otherwise half-filled shelves, the great importance of the regulation is found in the agreement of the local library to abide by the state's certification scheme for librarians. Other states are not so generous, as a rule; though in a few of them, notably Illinois and Ohio, the depression has resulted in valuable aid in the purchase of books. It

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remains to be seen whether an emergency measure will survive the stressful days which gave it being, and whether the state can be induced to see the library as an educational force, entitled to assistance because it makes for stability of government, for change as the outgrowth of logic and reason. American statesmen may well think the matter over.

The most enthusiastic trustee or librarian may hesitate to ask the state to help maintain the public library on the same basis as the public schools in New York are supported. There is plenty of argument, however, as to why the state should give aid in a greater or lesser degree. If libraries are actually educationally important, then as a matter of right they should expect favorable consideration. The trouble is, perhaps, that this newer agency has failed to convince the parents that without its assistance little Johnny can never hope to become President, or his little sister Mary attain the pinnacle of her ambition. Parents now grumble a bit when branch libraries are too far apart, or when their juvenile book cupboard is bare, more or less as it has been too generally these past eight lean years; but they do not rise up in the majesty of their American right and demand that fiscal boards do something about it. If a school building is needed, parent associations, with teacher backing, storm the most fortress-like city hall, and the authorities surrender. Library forces have not yet learned these arts of assault. Possibly they are not too sure of the place they hold in the hearts—and minds—of the people; probably they are less certain that their heaviest broadsides, once fired, will penetrate the tough armor worn by municipal and state fiscal authorities. After 50 or 60 years of intense library campaigning, it is evident that there is some weakness in our plan of operation, except in a few of the more favorably situated cities. The country, as a whole, needs to be plotted on some different and perhaps radically revised plan, before we may expect the results the public library is capable of giving.

For the most part, we are the victims of our ancestor, the subscription library. In the early days the oratorical statesman held the



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little red schoolhouse on the hill up to worldwide admiration: it would mold our people after the pattern of democracy, self-reliance, and room-at-the-top, which should forever continue this land of the free, this home of the brave. But the public library, coming later as an organization of citizens for their personal edification or amusement, had slight claim upon the municipal strongbox, and none at all upon the faraway state treasury. There was no recognition by the state of the part the library could contribute toward citizen fitness in a democracy. That conception of the library is a late development which has been accentuated by the experiences of the public during the depression, and especially by their contact with assistants engaged, avowedly, in adult education. It seems particularly timely, therefore, to consider changes in library organization, and to bring about a fair distribution of expenses between state and municipality. This writer must add that, as yet, he sees no reason for expecting any part of the library budget to come from the federal government. In other ways Washington can do its part toward the formation of a well-rounded nationwide library system; though it may be unfortunate that some states, poor in assessed valuation, but blessed with readers, will have difficulty, without such assistance, in equalizing library opportunity for all.

It seems altogether feasible to devise a public library system which, state by state, will present conditions approaching ideal support. The precedent found in the action of states like New York, where small annual allowances have been made to all public libraries for books, and like Illinois and Ohio, where grants for the same purpose have been made on a more generous scale, should be seized upon while the example is fresh in the popular and legislative mind. However, just to get more money is by no means the whole story. If there is a weakness in the average public library setup, a frank effort should be made, through the persuasion of more ample funds, to correct that defect. New York, as has already been noted, makes its allowance when certain personnel standards have been attained. It is not clear whether any spur to better organ-

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ization is offered by the grants made in the other states. Let the American Library Association, in cooperation with commissions or other state authority, set up a minimum standard for public libraries. Let that scheme cover such points as suitable unit for profitable operation, properly trained personnel, and minimum local support. The American Library Association has already given \$1 per capita as the lowest budgetary figure for a fairly satisfactory service; many cities have far exceeded that amount. Secure the adoption of this scheme by the states, providing that when the local library has reached the minimum standard it shall then receive a 50 per cent addition to its budget from state sources. This new allowance would not be used for books alone, but for all activities in just proportion. Such recognition, on the part of the state, of the educational importance of the public library will not only enable it to do its job, but will also more speedily bring the people to an appreciation of its value as a recreational agency of first importance and as an educational instrument of lifelong worth. A difficult problem, you say! Well, the ideal has always been elusive, but its pursuit is cure for most of our ills.

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# *Experimentation*

BY CARL H. MILAM

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THE MODERN LIBRARY has come into existence because of the belief that men can use recorded facts and ideas for the advancement of themselves and for the improvement of society. All of the thoughts and experiences which have been recorded are the materials with which it deals; and all people in nearly all of their relations are its potential beneficiaries. But the modern library is one of the younger social institutions. As compared with the university, for example, it is hardly more than an infant. Consequently, the structure which has been erected on this foundation is incomplete. The modern library is not sure of its fields, functions or specific objectives. Without belittling past achievements it may nevertheless be assumed that the library of the future will be a much more useful servant of individuals and of society than any library has yet become. It is the purpose of this chapter to suggest the role of experimentation in bringing about some of the anticipated improvements.

It may first be noted that there is no set pattern for libraries in America. No one authority decides for all libraries what books shall be bought or how they shall be made available. There is no authorized scheme of organization, of division into departments, or of those numerous library activities which are intended to encourage

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reading and study. While this may be less true for school libraries than for others, it is essentially true for all. Within certain broad limits, which are accepted rather than required, each library is free to determine its own precise objectives and to pursue them in its own way, limited only by public sentiment, available financial resources and the quantity and quality of intelligence and imagination possessed by trustees and librarians.

This freedom to do things differently can probably be credited with a considerable share of the progress which has characterized the modern library movement during the years of its history. The making of a catalog on cards was an experiment 60 or 70 years ago. The arrangement of books on shelves by subject, rather than size or date of accession, is still looked upon by some of our foreign colleagues as an experiment in extravagance. When libraries first allowed readers to take books home, when Mr. Brett of Cleveland first permitted ordinary human beings, not scholars or students, to come into contact with large numbers of books at one time through the open-shelf system, when children were not only permitted but encouraged to use public libraries, these were bold experiments. So were branches, stations, state traveling libraries, county libraries, the book automobile, readers advisory service, library training.

The conviction to be recorded here is that the library of the future will be and ought to be a continuously changing institution; and that librarians with imagination will formulate new objectives and, by trial and error, will establish new forms of organization and new services, and adjust and revise the old techniques to fit these services.

Library techniques—in spite of the jibes of our friendly critics—were developed to facilitate the use of libraries, not to amuse the librarians, and are worthy of further improvement through experimentation. Nevertheless, it may be hoped that much of our best thought will go not to their further refinement, but rather to exploration into the realms of book use. Obviously, such exploration, if it is to be of maximum usefulness, must take cognizance both of the inadequacy of libraries to meet present needs, and of the new

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obligations which arise because of changes in our ways of living, our ideas of education, and our attitudes toward government, business and labor.

Experimentation should not be conducted in ignorance of what is going on in our own or other fields. It must always be related to, and usually preceded by, investigation. The records of activities and measures of results should be as full and as accurate as possible. If the experiments can be conducted under controlled conditions such as might be established by an experienced research worker in the social sciences, so much the better. At the least they should be based on some reasonable hypothesis and the results should be impartially reported.

The writer is of the opinion that most, perhaps all, of the experiments suggested here *have* been tried somewhere. It does not appear, however, that any of them have been tried generally, or enough to convince most librarians either that they will or will not work.

*Experiments with New Types of Material.* The pamphlet is a form of print which is now laboring under grave distribution difficulties. The bookseller is naturally unwilling to carry it in stock because it does not pay its way. The librarian buys one copy which he usually stores in a vertical file or pamphlet case. It is easily accessible when needed for reference or circulation, but comparatively few readers know of its existence. It rarely leaves the building. The open-shelf system which almost everywhere in this country is applied to books is not often applied to pamphlets.

The present pamphleteering era may be only temporary. On the other hand, the pamphlet may come to fill an important permanent place in meeting the demand for up-to-the-minute information and opinion. In any case it is now with us in large numbers, and is capable of serving many people if a means for getting it to its audience can be found.

Many pamphlets on current questions are propagandistic, and the present methods of distribution (largely by mail to members of

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an organization) tend to get pamphlets with a certain point of view into the hands of people with the same point of view. The library would be performing an important public service if it could occasionally get readers to look at all sides of a public question as presented in several pamphlets; and it would be meeting one of its own direct and obvious obligations if it added measurably to the distribution and use of this form of print.

The Newark Public Library, which has pioneered on the pamphlet frontier for many years, now has a separate "Pamphlet Library" in the main library, and smaller collections in the branches. All readers are exposed to pamphlets, and the annual circulation has reached about 20,000. The Cleveland Public Library described in the *Library Journal* of December 15, 1936 its efforts to make pamphlets popular largely through displaying samples. S. W. Smith and Marion E. James have described recent experiments in Milwaukee with what M. S. Dudgeon once called "shirt sleeve literature" (*Library Journal*, September 15, 1936). Under the leadership of the U. S. Office of Education several libraries are now participating in an experiment in displaying a set of current affairs pamphlets with a view to increasing their distribution. More such experiments—with emphasis on circulation—are needed.

It is frequently predicted that a few years hence some agency will be lending moving picture films as libraries now lend books; that they will be used not only by schools and clubs, as they are now to a considerable extent, but also by individuals. Whether it is feasible for libraries to take on this function may be questioned, but the answer would be clearer if several libraries would try it out. There is the related question of whether libraries have a responsibility for the preservation of films for future generations.

Many libraries now buy and lend phonograph records. "Talking books" are circulated by libraries for the blind, and may have other uses not yet discovered. Another form of record has recently come into existence, namely, the electrical transcription of radio talks. Surely these records—which give us the voices as well as the words

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of some of our great personalities—should be preserved in public institutions. Is this a library responsibility?

Among the new mechanical aids to learning, none are more certainly of great importance to libraries than those which make it possible to reproduce library materials photographically on film at small expense. The effect which these copying devices may have on interlibrary loans, on the library's ability to supply hitherto unobtainable materials, on the preservation from wear and tear of rare books and manuscripts, is incalculable. At least two American librarians have predicted that the time will come when a good research library will undertake to supply its patrons on short notice with a copy of any book which exists in any library anywhere in the world! Film copies are already beginning to take their place in many great libraries. Yale University Library has recently expanded its film laboratory with foundation aid. The University of Chicago Library, with assistance from another foundation, has established one. The New York Public Library and many others are also experimenting. Much progress has been made with cameras, projectors and other apparatus; much more is said to be just around the corner. Here appears to be a field in which experimentation may result in revolutionizing some library practices which have existed for centuries, and thereby greatly expanding the library's usefulness.

*Experiments in Cooperation.* We have long recognized in theory that university and other large reference libraries and special libraries for research should be closely coordinated to avoid unnecessary duplication and to increase the availability of books, manuscripts, and related materials needed by research workers. Recently, experimentation in coordination has greatly increased. The Denver Public Library has become the bibliographic center for several libraries in three states. Union catalogs have multiplied. The librarians of 13 southern states are surveying their resources and planning together for coordination. Five states and one province in the Pacific Northwest have appointed a joint committee to work out a scheme of cooperation for all of the important libraries of that area. We have

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observed with admiration the work of the National Central Library in London and the establishment of regional centers. With similar objectives, we shall probably find it necessary to continue for several years our experimentation to determine what are logical regions in the United States, what functions can be performed by regional centers, whether regional centers of a general character are desirable as against different centers for each subject, as well as to evolve the devices and codes of practice which will fit a country or a continent of our size.

Of the 6,235 public libraries in the United States, nearly 5,400 are in towns of less than 10,000 population. In Iowa, 92 (more than half) of the public libraries have annual incomes of less than \$2,000 each. Carnovsky's study of book collections in the small libraries in the Chicago area disclosed the fact that most such libraries are making few recent nonfiction books available to their readers.

Adequate educational and informational service is impossible with the limited facilities—books and personnel—which small libraries are able to provide. Consolidation of several such libraries in one administrative unit is desirable in many instances, but difficult of accomplishment. Cooperation would appear to be a step in the right direction, and not so difficult.

One form of cooperation would be an informal pooling of book funds. For example, three libraries close together, each having perhaps \$400 a year to spend for books, might agree to spend \$200 each independently, and \$600 in common, the books purchased from the common fund to be divided equally and to be exchanged at intervals. Any number of variations of this suggestion are conceivable. All the libraries of a county might be included. The object would be to increase the resources available to the communities served and to discover how far libraries can go to advantage in pooling their holdings and services. It might be possible in some instances, also, for two or more libraries to employ jointly a children's librarian, or readers adviser, or other specialist.

In somewhat larger libraries the experiment might be in subject



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specialization. Each library would buy the books it commonly needs in all subjects; but the more expensive materials would be purchased by only one library; one specializing in the fine arts, another in business and technology, another in the social sciences, etc. The arrangement would of course include free use of the materials in the "special" collections by the patrons of all libraries in the scheme.

*Adequate Service in One Field.* One often hears librarians say: "We don't need any reading lists or other publicity on that subject; the books are always out, anyway; we never have enough to supply the demand." It is probably true that no good large library has ever had enough books and enough assistants to enable it to do all that it might do in any field. This means that no library has yet had an opportunity to find out what the capacity of its community is to make use of books and library services.

It may therefore be hoped that some library, sometime, will try the experiment of doing all it can with one subject, such as gardening or drama or better English, or with one group of readers, such as parents or forum attendants. Such an experiment would involve money for materials, publicity of many sorts, and one or more special assistants. It might effectively demonstrate to the people who control library incomes and to the general public, as well as to librarians, that the library is capable of performing a much larger service than it has yet done.

The radio readers adviser experiment suggested in another paragraph is somewhat similar to this.

*The Rural Library.* Because rural adult education (especially agricultural extension) appears to have got on rather well in most areas without libraries, and because the rural library tends more or less to follow the conventional urban library pattern, it is interesting to contemplate what would be the result if the rural people and the rural adult education agencies of some county were themselves to develop, without much help from library tradition, the type of agency they need for making reading and other visual materials available. The farmers and the farm agencies are concerned with

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county agricultural planning, cooperative marketing, cooperative buying, soil improvement, the prevention of erosion, etc. They might create a type of library and library service which would be pointed more definitely to their present and future problems than would a little imitation of a city library set down in their midst. Such an experiment might help to indicate where the emphasis in rural library service should be placed; and it might also demonstrate whether a library can deliberately promote interest and reading in subjects which are considered socially important and at the same time avoid telling people what opinions they should hold with respect to these subjects.

*Broadening the Base.* A constantly recurring thought with a few librarians is that the public library has overdone the business of "sticking to its last." Perhaps under some circumstances it could be the actual head and center of all or most of a community's informal adult education activities. Perhaps Mr. Carnegie was right when he established the Homestead Library as a community center. Maybe the Director of libraries in the T.V.A. is right when she encourages librarians in T.V.A. centers to assume responsibility for most of the recreational and informal educational activities, however remote from reading. A university president once suggested that public libraries should have laboratories and shops as well as reading rooms.

*Reaching Readers Who Are Only Casually Interested.* Experiments might be tried with various physical arrangements and facilities to determine which offer the most effective invitation, and the least deterring formality to persons who are only casually interested in reading. There might be browsing rooms fitted up more like a living room than a public institution. Smoking might be permitted. The assistant would be a hostess. Books would be arranged according to the interest categories of the casual reader, rather than for the scholar. The reader's point of view would control the preparation of catalogs, indexes, reading lists, and, in so far as possible, everything else. All of this would be for the patrons or prospective

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patrons with miscellaneous rather than closely defined subject interests, for those who are interested or could be interested in reading for general education and a broad cultural background.

Such an experiment should probably be tried first in a small or medium-sized or branch library, as it would seem very difficult to introduce an air of informality into a great building.

*Library Personnel.* Important experiments are now being conducted at Columbia School of Library Service and elsewhere with tests for admission and for measuring accomplishment. They may have to continue for many years before anyone can know with reasonable certainty how to eliminate at the start those who would be misfits in the library profession, and how best to measure the effectiveness of professional education.

The kind and degree of specialization in education for librarianship and the right place for it are important and largely unanswered questions. In the first-year curriculum, with some important exceptions, the library schools attempt to produce "a librarian" who presumably can do any kind of work. The employer, seeking a person for a specialized position, examines the candidate's record of studies in college, his experience, his interests and his aptitudes, but usually does not expect any specialization in professional education. One important exception is the children's librarian; and it may very well be that the specialized training is an important reason for the excellence of the work which libraries do for children. Much experimentation in specialization for students who carry on beyond the first years is now taking place. More undoubtedly will occur in the future.

There is much justification for insisting upon a broad program during the first year. But it is not clear that breadth should or can be achieved by a wide range of offerings primarily of processes and methods. Some library school might experiment with the division of the curriculum into two parts: the first to be concerned with philosophy, principles, functions and reasons for the existence of libraries of different kinds; the second with processes in general or

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with processes in a broad field, such as circulation work in a public library; or reference work and bibliography; or accession, cataloging and bibliography; or college and university library administration.

We librarians appear to assume that library school training—usually one year—is the end of our professional education. After that, it is enough if we read and attend meetings. In recent years a few college and university librarians, a good many school librarians and some library school instructors have followed the teaching profession back to the universities—but far too few public librarians. The cost and the necessary leaves of absence are parts of the problem. It is quite possible, however, that the chief obstacle has been the lack of library school courses in summer sessions which deal with important, nontechnical problems. There appears to be a need for long and short courses, but especially short courses, on such subjects as sources of library income, relations with local government and local organizations, the library and adult education, the college library and modern methods of college teaching, etc. These subjects are largely absent from the first-year curriculum, yet they are the subjects around which many of the problems of the working librarian center. Such experiments as have already been made indicate a fair probability of success, both from the standpoint of reasonable attendance and of the availability of competent instructors.

Many other opportunities for profitable experimentation await the schools and also any library organizations which are willing to try out various schemes for post-professional education, whether institutes, special discussion groups, home study and examinations, or internships. Exchanges also offer a fruitful way of enriching the experience of trained and competent librarians, but they are now relatively infrequent. The subject is worthy of more exploration. — *College Libraries*. The library experiment at Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri (which is itself an experimental junior college), has attracted wide attention among librarians and college administrators. The librarian is equipped with professional train-

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ing for education and librarianship. He is dean of instruction as well as director of the library. The whole college is engaged in an ambitious effort to make books function more effectively in the life of the undergraduate.

Other college library experiments related to the new trends in education (with their emphasis on self-education through reading), possibly variants of the Stephens College experiment, possibly quite different, may be in order. Some of the ideas may involve new building arrangements and new equipment, as well as new types of educational service. Some of them may be for the whole college; others for particular groups within a college. There might well be more trying out of the readers adviser idea in college libraries. The recent entrance into college library work of a considerable number of unusually alert young men and women may be expected to produce a good crop of new ideas.

The typical university in America has both undergraduate and graduate students. The university library is called upon to serve the research needs of graduate students and professors, and to provide books and service for undergraduates. In many respects these functions are quite dissimilar. The experiment of having a separate library for undergraduates, or the junior college, is not unknown but possibly deserves further trial. It would appear that such a library, separately housed and staffed (but under the administration of the university librarian), with only a few thousand titles, generously duplicated to meet both instructional and general reading needs, might prove to be a good solution for some of the problems which arise out of the university library's dual responsibility.

*Libraries and Broadcasting.* For several years now, librarians have talked freely about taking advantage of the stimulation in educational broadcasting to increase the use of libraries. From time to time there has been an effort to check up on what libraries have accomplished. The results are far from gratifying. Library efforts at cooperation have been stopped short by lack of personnel and materials. When the A.L.A. has been offered opportunity to pre-

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pare reading lists in connection with national broadcasts, it has been forced to decline for the same reasons or to do a wholly inadequate job. Two or three years ago, the A.L.A. Committee on Library Radio Broadcasting reached the conclusion that, until one institution, at least, had found the means for carrying on a somewhat elaborate experiment, we could not know how effective the library might be in the stimulation of reading following broadcasts. The experiment suggested calls for a radio readers adviser who would give full time to trying out the various ways of stimulating reading in connection with the broadcasts which reach the community in which the library is situated. It also calls for a special fund for the purchase of reading materials and especially for duplication, so that people drawn to the library as a result of the efforts may not be disappointed. This experiment has not yet been made.

During the past five years, the political scientists and other students of government tried their hands at broadcasting the "You and Your Government" series. The economists, the psychologists and many other professional groups have conducted similar programs in their fields. During that period, members of A.L.A. committees and other librarians have agreed with each other that there should be a national program about books and reading sponsored by the libraries of America. Detailed projects have been prepared but not tried. The same may be said for children's programs.

Of local library broadcasting there has been a great deal. But we have apparently much further to go before any library program will have proved itself as much a success as some of those presented by other educational agencies.

*Regional Libraries.* Regional libraries are a means of improving (through consolidation or federation) existing small libraries as well as a way of establishing service for those now wholly without it. The citizens of some rural areas may be without library service simply because they do not want it enough to pay for it. The fact is, however, that the laws for library maintenance are suited to cities and large, populous counties, and not to sparsely populated

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rural areas and small towns. Most of our successful experience has been in the large cities and counties. Public libraries for rural people simply do not fit into the governmental clothes which are now made and ready-to-wear. That, we know. We do not know what the size of the governmental garment should be, or of what elements it should be composed, and we can find out only by trial.

Port authorities, sanitary districts, water districts, consolidated schools, and various other agencies of government have pointed the way, but none has cut a pattern which exactly fits the library. The need is for more experiments with large units like those in British Columbia and Vermont.

*Business Machines and Business Methods.* There is a tradition, based on at least some facts, that card filing systems, now used extensively in business, originated with librarians. And it sometimes seems to the librarian that the department store or bank or hotel could even now profitably imitate some library methods. On the whole, however, the library appears to have fallen behind the procession. It is reported that a very efficient European librarian, interested in still further improvement of method, visited this country in search of new ideas; and that he found them, almost not at all in libraries, but in the offices of companies devoted to transportation and communication! Certainly it is true that experimentation with some business machines not commonly used in libraries is long overdue.

Other experiments may be more important than those suggested. But this writer is convinced that continuous experimentation of some kind is most important. The pioneers in the modern library movement were experimenters. The things they did for the first time are the things for which they are remembered. If the library is to continue to hold the place in society to which they brought it, and to make advancement, it will be in part because present and future generations of librarians are equally bold in trying out new ideas for making their service meet the needs of their generation.

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# *One for All; A Historical Sketch of Library Cooperation, 1930-1970*

BY ROBERT BINGHAM DOWNS

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BY THE EARLY 1930's the frontier and pioneer traditions were fast fading into the past. There were few spots remaining where any contemporary Daniel Boone could get out of hearing of the bark of his neighbor's dog. As the scene changed, a cherished national characteristic of America, rugged individualism, became more and more of a museum piece. Society was becoming too complex, too closely interrelated and interdependent to tolerate the ruthless if picturesque methods of the trail blazer. The champions of *laissez faire* had not given up the fight and declared that all individual opportunity was being lost under the new regime. The validity of their arguments was doubtful, but in any case there could be no going back. The growth of social consciousness was bringing about profound modifications in many established institutions. Schools, colleges, universities, libraries, museums, and hospitals were being shaken out of their self-centered existence and each was coming to realize that its actions affected other similar organizations.

Cooperation has long been an overworked word in the librarian's vocabulary. Unfortunately, until the beginning of the period here treated there had been more discussion than practice of this fine art. Of course notable instances of library cooperation could be listed,



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from the compilation of *Poole's index* onward. Nevertheless, the vast majority of libraries, large and small, had developed with scant regard to their neighbors. In the public library field conditions were chaotic. Town and city libraries were serving restricted areas, leaving untouched the large population outside city limits. On the great research library level, likewise, near anarchy prevailed. Each institution had as a general rule built up its collection without trying to ascertain whether it was unnecessarily duplicating the work of another library. Frequently keen rivalries rather than gaps in knowledge determined buying activities. In either case the sheer waste of time and money was often appalling.

The present writer's primary concern is with resources for advanced study and research. To some other historian it will be left to relate the fascinating tale of how the public librarians worked out their salvation along cooperative lines, and their part in the chronicle will be touched upon here only as it pertains to the many-sided problem of materials for scholars and students.

Librarians in the 1930's, interested in the increase and coordination of research materials, found themselves working in the dark for lack of information on available resources. It was therefore decided to undertake a nationwide survey, sending trained investigators to inspect and inventory the holdings of every type of library containing collections of potential value. The results of this intensive study, made jointly by libraries and learned societies, were published in a series of volumes by the American Library Association, and formed a basis for many of the later developments here described. Without such a preliminary view these far-reaching plans for library cooperation would have been constantly handicapped, and indeed might never have come to actual realization.

The growth of the great Union Catalog in Washington to a virtually complete record of all important books in libraries throughout the world is now a generally known fact. Started at the beginning of the present century, this monumental bibliographical tool expanded slowly for the first three or four decades of its history.

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Librarians by then had generally recognized that in the union catalog idea lay the solution for some of the most perplexing problems that had presented obstacles to library cooperation. Interest in union catalogs had become so widespread by 1936 that in that year a conference of librarians and technical experts met in Washington to consider future developments. There came out of this conference a determination to support the national Union Catalog with all possible measures. The Rockcarn Foundation made several generous grants to enable libraries to prepare records of their holdings for inclusion in the catalog. The expense was too large, however, for any single agency except the federal government, and in 1950 Congress approved the first of a series of annual appropriations, leading eventually to a comprehensive record of all American library collections of distinction. By 1970 there were over 135,000,000 cards on file for this country alone. Through the system, established about 25 years ago, of reporting new acquisitions, the catalog at Washington now contains information on all important additions made to libraries of the nation.

In 1955 leaders in the library profession recommended that the foreign section of the Union Catalog be enlarged. Negotiations were entered into with the governments and outstanding libraries of all foreign countries. Agreements were made to supply each of these nations with a film copy of the American Union Catalog in exchange for a record of books in its libraries. So far has this undertaking now developed that we may say the age-old dream of bibliographers for a universal bibliography at last is brought to practical fulfillment. About every five years for the past generation film copies of the complete national Union Catalog have been made and distributed widely over the United States. In essence these are new editions of the catalog and have facilitated more extensive use of resources available in each region, and have also relieved the central catalog staff of much routine searching and correspondence.

At the beginning of the period under review a striking suggestion was made by certain university administrators for the establishment

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of great storehouses of little used books. So many practical difficulties were met that the proposal came to nothing. This scheme may have been one of several factors, however, which helped to emphasize the expensive problem of space for rapidly accumulating collections. Another consideration was the ever-growing number of published books and journals. No one library could hope to buy and store them all, and individual library budgets could not be increased fast enough to cover the cost of even the most important titles in all fields. The only satisfactory answer to questions of space and expense was found to be cooperation. The country was divided into the now familiar six regions: Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, Southwest, Middle states, and Far west, each division based upon a common cultural and economic background. From 1945 to 1960 these areas built up regional union catalogs at strategic points, and listed there their book resources. These catalogs are, of course, complementary to the Union Catalog at Washington, enabling each section to make maximum use of local facilities. Comprehensive purchasing agreements have been entered into by the research libraries in every region, each library undertaking to develop definite subject fields and types of publications. The load of maintaining unbroken files of the immense number of learned journals of the world has been spread over the entire group of libraries. In numerous instances there have been transfers of material to help an institution round out a collection. For example, if one library assumes responsibility for historical material on fascism, that curious phenomenon of the 1920's and 1930's, other libraries in the area have transferred their miscellaneous files on the subject to the special collection. In effect there has been a redistribution of resources, and seldom seen now are the large heterogeneous libraries typical of the first part of the century, each having something of everything but rarely being exhaustive in any field.

At the first meeting of the American Library Association in 1876, Justin Winsor predicted the use of the telegraph and pneumatic tubes to facilitate delivery of books to branches of a public library.

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Now, nearly 100 years later, we have still not achieved anything quite so rapid as Mr. Winsor's ideal, but for nearly two decades there have been developing, in all the larger cities of the country, quick delivery services to bring libraries into closer unity. In New York, for example, the numerous college, university, public, and special libraries are reached twice daily by an organization which brings wanted books from other libraries and returns borrowed volumes. Every institution, of course, has a complete catalog showing the contents of collections in the New York metropolitan area. Naturally there is little incentive for these libraries to duplicate each other needlessly, and the total resources of the city can be made immediately available wherever required.

The potentialities of microfilm, which came into general use about 1940, were soon realized by forward-looking librarians. Almost immediately the new medium revolutionized interlibrary loan practices. It was no longer necessary to trust rare books and journals to the none too tender mercies of the primitive transportation systems of the time. Instead, a film copy, which the borrowing library could retain permanently, was sent. As the cost of film was steadily reduced through technical processes, it became possible for one library to supply another, without prohibitive expense, with a large body of special material for scholarly use. When all the continents had been linked in 1948 by regularly scheduled airship service, and the postwar barriers to international communication were broken down, it became an easy matter to send books on loan back and forth between countries. It is now possible to secure in two days time a film copy of a book from any part of the world, except from a few remote regions.

Newspapers, once the bane of existence of librarians because of difficulties in preservation and excessive requirements for storage space, became a minor problem after the introduction of microfilm. For the major newspapers, both American and foreign, a scheme of cooperation was soon developed whereby each library assumed a prorata share of the film cost and each received a copy of the current

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files. For papers of more limited interest regional plans were arranged, with each library in a given area responsible for preserving certain specific titles. A like scheme was arranged for foreign publications. Historians and other research workers are still plagued by the numerous gaps in newspaper files before 1940. A majority of local papers were apparently lost *in toto* simply because no libraries undertook to save them. A turning point in this problem came with the publication of one of the early cooperative enterprises, the *Union list of newspapers*, in 1937. Numerous important runs of newspapers in publishers' offices and obscure libraries were thereby uncovered. Then a cooperative project was proposed and carried through for filming these papers and placing copies in the large libraries of the nation, a step for which historians have every cause to be grateful.

The success of the newspaper plan was matched in two other fundamental research fields, historical manuscripts and public documents. In the older settled sections of the country were to be found vast quantities of early letters, diaries, journals, account books, and other manuscript records, scattered for the most part in the cellars and attics of private homes and constantly exposed to fire, water and other hazards. New England was a pioneer in the rescue of such materials. Profiting by her example, the South and other regions began a systematic canvass of existing collections in order to bring them into safe custody. As the result of this campaign and a large degree of institutional cooperation, there are now few important manuscript collections outside of libraries.

The destructive forces of modern warfare frequently have endangered the great archival sources of history, and in some instances have caused irreparable losses. More or less spasmodic efforts were made early in the twentieth century by various American institutions to reproduce such materials. Eventually it was seen that concerted action was necessary for thorough coverage of the important collections. Owing to the specialized interest of the documents, a limited number of duplicates would meet all conceivable require-

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ments. This fact meant there could be little economy through multiple copies. The final plan, put into effect in 1958, divided the field among 27 outstanding libraries of the United States. Thirty-three foreign institutions agreed to share the expense and become depositories for portions of the reproductions. Utilization of new and rapid copying processes reduced the expense and time required for the enterprise. There has not yet been adequate treatment of all countries, especially some of the smaller nations, but there are now available in at least two of the cooperating libraries, copies of every notable archival collection in Madrid, Rome, Lisbon, Paris, Berlin, London, and numerous other manuscript centers. The chances are exceedingly remote that any cataclysm of war or natural disaster could be so complete as to destroy both originals and reproductions.

Public documents were one of the first areas in which effective library cooperation was achieved. As early as 1930 centers were designated for saving official publications originating in each region. During the succeeding 15 years the problem of preserving all local and state documents was fully worked out. The foreign field presented greater difficulties because of its complexity and volume. As in the case of newspapers and other materials, it was found that the most satisfactory solution lay in specialization among libraries. A group of interested institutions in each region worked out divisions along geographical and subject lines which have been highly efficient in bringing together the world's important documentary publications. Noteworthy also were the projects for filming long runs of British *Parliamentary papers*, and other files no longer procurable in their original form. Through library sharing of the expense of reproduction, copies of these are now widely available.

For a long period the disposal of duplicate material was an annoying problem for libraries. National clearing houses were organized about 40 years ago to handle special classes, such as periodicals and public documents, and this plan was partially satisfactory. There remained, however, immense quantities of valuable duplicate materials in all fields, taking up needed space and of no use to the

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possessors. Attempts to handle the problem on a national scale were abortive. The regional approach was finally tried, with striking success. In each of the six major cooperating regions, warehouses were constructed and to these were sent duplicates of every type from libraries. At the beginning a considerable staff of professional and clerical workers was required to arrange and list the collection. Later only a skeleton staff was needed. The distribution of duplicates has been largely on a subject basis, the idea, of course, being to complete those fields for which libraries had assumed primary responsibility. Under the agreement a library received approximately the same amount of material as it put into the collection, though this arrangement was not adhered to if a larger number of titles was needed by an institution in order to round out a special division. After a time it was discovered that a certain residue was left after all the requirements of a particular region had been met. These remainders were shipped to other regional depositories. The final result was to place everything where it would be of maximum use and completely to eliminate waste.

So much for the major advances in library cooperation over the last forty years. Only the highlights have been touched upon here. A look into the future encourages one to prophesy even greater progress to come. New fields are opening which will call for the best combined intelligence of the library profession. To control these forthcoming changes, the ideal of "one for all and all for one" should prove as effective in the future as it has in the recent past.

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## *Libraries and Scholarship*

BY SYDNEY B. MITCHELL

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THIS paper does not deal with miracles nor with prophecies. Perhaps I might indulge in a few pipe dreams and imagine a society in 25 years which would put the librarian at the throttle of culture so that all the power of research and scholarship answered to his pressure, but I can also visualize a society where it is the librarian who would be throttled and his office reduced to that of propaganda. Nor do I care to write of mechanical miracles, of reference robots who would answer any one of ten thousand questions. It is not difficult to think of the changes in library service which might conceivably come with the developments and refinements of television, soon to be with us, or of microphotography, already here. But I have lived 35 years in scholarly libraries, and from that experience I am unwilling to say that in the next quarter century scholarship will be divorced from the unusual individual and the unusual collection of material for his use. If one may not garden and sit in the shade one may hardly be scholarly and keep out of the shade—of the lamp, in this case. I shall also have to assume that scholarship may mean a broad general culture, naturally now limited or focused in a way not necessary when “a scholar and a gentleman” was a person of good breeding who had a nice acquaintance with the humanities and probably a classical education. Also that



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it may mean such thorough acquaintance with a small field, intensively cultivated, that from complete knowledge of its literature, in some cases, in others from the combination of this with experiment, a crop is produced, new relations established, new theories propounded, new information furnished. This is productive scholarship.

For scholarship or research in any of these senses there are two essentials—men and materials. Perhaps one should add complete freedom in the endeavors of the former and in the collection of the latter, for even as the biologists had to fight for 50 years for freedom of experimentation and had to face obstruction from established interests fearful of their findings, so social scientists may be cramped and hindered in their research, and librarians in the collection of materials, by the entrenched forces of those who feel they will suffer from social change and the results of investigation into our economic and political situation.

It would not be difficult to demonstrate that the emphasis in the last quarter century in American scholarly libraries has been on the materials. This is not surprising, for we are a wealthy people and materials can be bought, but men have to be bred. It is easy to show the foreign visitor library buildings of grandeur and of modern and efficient equipment; it is easy to show fellow librarians the treasures which our money and our energy have enabled us to gather together in these fine buildings. We take pleasure in our plans for the development of our collections into more complete laboratories for research, but have the librarians to care for them shown comparable development? Are we not still noticeably short of scholarly librarians, of staffs which measure up to their materials for scholarship, of men and women to whom the teaching and research scholars are willing often even to concede a real understanding of scholarship and its requirements, let alone acknowledge them as active aids or participants in productive scholarship?

How is librarianship going to attract to itself now the men and women who will be essential to the scholarly libraries of tomorrow?

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What shall be their character, their general education, their training for librarianship, their fields of service and their future in the libraries where they are so needed? It would first of all seem necessary to recruit to the service of scholarly libraries a greater proportion of men with positive capacities and inclination for scholarship and relatively less ambition for administrative responsibilities. I mention men because thus far it is men who have predominantly shown these characteristics and in many fields of scholarship it is men alone who have been encouraged to continue. With the conditions which have been responsible for the attitude towards women's working for the doctorate we are not here concerned—they are in part social and in part professional. Perhaps in time if graduate departments realize that there are placement opportunities in scholarly libraries for their best women, to take charge of special subject collections and to head departmental libraries, they may become more receptive to women. Certainly this should be an opportunity for women of scholarly instincts who perhaps more often than men are imbued with a desire to help others. When, as has now come about, graduate library schools have gravitated to large universities, the recruiting of both men and women of this character should be comparatively easy, with the chief difficulty the necessity of seeing that those encouraged to become librarians have such personal and social qualities as are essential to their usefulness in dealing with people.

The question of the best general education for those who plan eventually to provide library service for scholars is still unsettled. In the opinion of many of our most scholarly university librarians the professional doctorate in librarianship is not the answer today. They believe that as a preparation for teaching or research in the professional field it may be very satisfactory. Some would approve it also as a preparation for executive work, but frankly say that they would prefer in charge of special collections or subject divisions of the university library those who have undertaken the discipline for the Ph.D. degree in subject, or nonprofessional, fields. The ade-

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quacy of such preparation is however doubted by those who state, without much contradiction, that the doctorate is now practically a professional degree and that, far from turning out good scholars in even one subject, it is becoming limited to the preparation of technicians, experts in some narrow field, whose services are acceptable as such, but whose educational influence is narrowing. From the librarian's standpoint this is certainly true. The discipline is too much focused on a narrow field for the service of one whose function it will have to be to keep in mind the interests of scholars in a much wider subject area. The emphasis placed on the completion of a piece of research must also tend to direct attention to the importance of personal research, rather than to interest the individual in bibliographical service concerned with the accumulation of materials and their scholarly use by others.

It is fortunate that many of our more critical educators have lately been concerned with rather traditional requirements and overemphasis on specialization in the discipline for the doctorate, so that in universities as far apart as Harvard and California the rumblings of discontent may become the prelude to what seem earthquakes to the conservative. Harvard's recently announced provisions for doctorates in the history of science and in American literature, without emphasis on philology but with consideration of its broad cultural background, are heartening to those who feel that to take charge of a science library the present requirements for a doctorate in zoology or botany are hampering. The study of the history of science must be so integrated with its literature that a degree in that field would constitute almost ideal preparation for one whose life is to be spent in a scholarly science library. In a comparable way, the correlation of literature with history, economics and politics, perhaps even art, should give just that breadth desirable for library positions such as might be available in large universities, in such public libraries as that of New York City, and in the special literature collections typified by the Huntington Library.

The training in librarianship which should be added to such a

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general education has nowhere been satisfactorily worked out as yet. Attempts have been made at some of the graduate library schools to effect some sort of combination of first and second year subjects as would meet the needs of the occasional student coming with a Ph.D. degree, but such a student is generally irritated by both the approach and the highly technical character of first-year courses. When the demand is strong enough, one or two schools at least should experiment with a more mature and quicker moving program which will provide the technical equipment but allow for a broader philosophical and bibliographical approach. For those who have this double equipment, beginning salaries should equal those of university instructors, and in large libraries enough positions should exist in a quarter century to provide advancement in salary for these scholar-librarians, comparable to that of associate professors. Some will doubtless show administrative ability and eventually take on such responsibilities along with the generally higher salaries, but from a faculty standpoint they will retain always that understanding of scholarship and research the existence of which is often questioned by those whose experience has been purely technical or administrative.

Without such men and women—not those with obvious limitations of personality or physique who have been forced into this phase of librarianship as a regrettable second choice, but men and women who have selected scholarly library work as one of the most important agencies of education—it is difficult to see how scholarship will be adequately satisfied in libraries. This particular type of librarian would doubtless occasionally publish on his own account, but the mistake of trying to make good college teachers into poor productive scholars should not be repeated with scholar-librarians. The rewards, financial and cultural, should be evident enough to draw and keep in this field men and women admittedly lacking in any number in the American library scenery of today, without their having to give up their lives to administration. Failing these rewards, librarians of the future will be as great contributors to

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scholarship as they are today—and as small. They will remain administrators and technicians, perhaps general educators, but scholarship will still have to be borrowed from the faculty.

The matter of materials is much simpler than that of men. It has always been so. Greece could pass on its Parthenon and Rome its Colosseum—these were material things, but they could not even keep democracy themselves. The materials of productive scholarship are various, some unique, some rare, most of them expensive and bulky—manuscripts, records, documents, newspapers, monumental works, journals and society transactions embodying the records of earlier research and current additions to knowledge, and in the social sciences a large unorganized body of ephemeral material. Scholarly libraries must have the most important materials in many fields, everything in some few.

Perhaps the first lesson in accumulation will be learned in the next quarter century—the lesson of limitation. There are doubtless librarians whose acquisitive sense is overdeveloped but, without the agreement of trustees, administrators and faculty to establish positive spheres of research and as definitely leave to other institutions the responsibility for the collection of materials and cultivation of others, the foolish competition of the last 25 years will continue, whatever librarians may desire and advocate. It should be a fair assumption that between them costs and cooperation will end such competition, at least between institutions at no great distance from each other.

The development of microphotography should be such that accumulation of materials will become much easier and much cheaper. Not only will it be possible for libraries working together to get comparatively cheap reproductions of individual works, documents, files of journals and publications of learned societies, which during the last two decades have become very expensive and almost unprocurable in their original form, but unique records will be made regionally available and newspapers and other materials, scarce, bulky, and ephemeral because of their poor paper, will be

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more readily provided for those needing them. In its help to scholars in the social sciences, presumably the great field of research in the future, the importance of cheap copies which can be economically stored and readily transported can hardly be overestimated. As has been stated, it will make possible the reproduction of basic materials for research, it will preserve what will otherwise disintegrate, will save space and will also allow the publication of studies of rather limited circulation. It may readily add a new kind of service in libraries. The librarian who is a subject specialist may be able to go from the compilation of bibliographies to the actual reproduction for scholars of the materials they need at hand or wish to look over. In the case of the current periodical literature it may mean providing scholars with film copies of abstracts of what is appearing in their fields of interest. Projectors will be so cheap, so easily handled, so commonly available that their use will be accepted everywhere.

While it may be utopian, if our present social system endures, to predict great regional research libraries, one would not hesitate to say that great research centers may be developed, areas where the concentration of people and of libraries may make possible a degree of cooperation and integration now difficult, that only in exceptional cases will it be necessary for a scholar to travel thousands of miles in his own country to get complete facilities for his work. Not all the reasonably complete files of Canadian documents, let us say, will be east of the Mississippi, though not more than one or two need be available on the Pacific coast. Such research centers can hardly be predicated on a state basis; they will naturally develop in areas of population concentration where great university, special or state libraries—or all of these—exist, and the problem will be the integration of their interests and the pooling of their resources. It is conceivable that national and regional boards on research will ultimately designate the area or the particular institution where the material belongs, and a unique Chinese collection, let us say, will go where it will supplement existing facilities, not where there

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happens to be someone who can be persuaded to pay the price for it. In a more enlightened age, scholars will work where unique, special collections exist rather than expect to have attempts made to duplicate these in their own institution.

Heading these regional research centers will be the Library of Congress, where by 1963 there will be available, not only its then great collections, but a record of the existence of any work in the United States, with its location, and a fine bibliographical service available to scholars throughout the country.

It follows, of course, that the present-day trends in interlibrary loans will have become so emphasized as to constitute the practice of the future. They will be requested not as a favor but as a service of scholarship, to be paid for by the borrowing library. The very term loan may disappear when what will be supplied at cost will be mechanical reproductions of the material desired, on films, paper or cards of whatever form or size is desired. The questions to be discussed at future library meetings will not be whether a service is to be rendered but just what is the best way to do it.

The records necessary to make effective libraries for scholars have possibly not yet been devised. We who have been brought up on the card catalog, particularly on that dissipated form of it called the dictionary catalog, have been wont to accept it as the last word in records of book holdings, while our scholars are perplexed by its complexity and appalled at its cost. Now even we are questioning whether there will be room in future libraries for anything else. As the records needed for future scholars may well have to include all the books in a region, or all the books on some subject available in any library, we can only hope that the next quarter century will bring about such novel methods of reproduction that films or photographs enlarged when in actual use will give us cheap and compactly housed records of holdings, and that a field for librarians will open up in the compilation of bibliographies of subjects which will constitute records of existing materials, act as buying lists or furnish the location of the nearest available copies. Beginnings have

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been made on a great union card catalog at the Library of Congress, and on catalogs of cities or centers, but at great cost and with the limitation of such tools in use. Something better must come. The problem will in part be simplified when the use of scholarly libraries is limited to those who need them, and people in process of education are unencumbered by greater book collections and more complicated records than they can conveniently use.

The housing of scholarly libraries is today unduly complicated by the fondness of donors and institutions for monumental library buildings, and also by the now passing desire to gather all book users into one place, which naturally has become overlarge for convenience and comfort. Hordes of undergraduates swarming around the library, who might well be served in study halls or special libraries adapted to their limited needs, constitute hindrances to library service to scholarship. Huge gothic or renaissance halls do nothing to help the scholar. The university library seems destined to abandon the attempt to house such heterogeneous groups under one roof and to develop special libraries providing for group collections in the humanities, the social sciences, the biological and the physical sciences. Many of the large buildings built since 1900 will become too small long before 1963, so books will be drawn out from the general collection and brought closer physically to the graduate students and faculty needing them. Yet, the size of the unit being so much greater than that of the old departmental library, it will permit of full service in hours open and its librarians will have a quality of knowledge of the collection now hardly obtainable. Evidences of this trend are already seen at Chicago and at California. In these new libraries for service, not for show, light and air will be independent of natural supplies, studies and cubicles may be soundproof or really noiseless typewriters will be supplied, and the mechanical equipment for the use of films and other microphotographic accessories will be everywhere available. Possibly President Eliot's idea of cheap union storage stack buildings for the less live books of many neighboring libraries may after many years be



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adopted, as improvements in communication and transportation annihilate distance and make a cooperative storage and service both economical and effective.

Without doubt productive scholarship will still in 25 years be associated with the university libraries, with special libraries and with fine reference libraries which occasionally are part of a public library system. The sphere of the good public library will doubtless lie in popular literature and adult education, with I hope less emphasis on purely pastime reading than at present. Two trends of the public library likely to be very evident by 1963 will be the regional library system and, as a natural consequence of its size and income, the possibility of more division by subject than today, consequently collections and staff members better fitted to aid scholarship. The regional library may well become the reservoir for all materials for the study of the region served, and therefore the best possible place to study its social problems, its economic questions, its history, its government, its agriculture and horticulture, its natural history, its industries. Such libraries, by their close relations with others, may well become centers for service to a type of scholar which has long been evident on the English scene, the knowledgeable amateur. In the era of greater leisure there should develop a kind of American amateur scholar who because of our temperament and tendency to specialize may even outclass the nineteenth century English amateur. In many spheres where a lifetime of application is unnecessary, he may, with the aid of his library, add his little bit in extending the boundaries of knowledge and also find a more satisfying life, for there are few greater pleasures than being an expert, an authority in some subject which may be quite outside that in which one earns a living.

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## *Extension of Library Service*

BY JUDSON T. JENNINGS

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IN THE sunny month of June, in the year of our Lord 1976, several thousand bookish people met for conference in the City of Brotherly Love. Of more than ordinary significance was this particular occasion because leading librarians and eminent educators from civilized nations throughout the world had foregathered to felicitate the American Library Association and to assist in celebrating its one hundredth birthday. Compelling speakers outlined various phases of the American library movement. One described the organization of the Association in this same city of Philadelphia in 1876 and cited events that signalized that period as the real beginning of library progress: the historic government report on libraries, the invention of the Dewey classification, the founding of the Library Bureau, and the appearance of the first issue of the *Library Journal*.

But the speaker who drew most applause was Melvil Dana Putnam, when he described the progress of the movement called "Library Extension." This was an important feature of the program because the A.L.A. was able for the first time to announce that the United States and Canada were at last completely covered by adequate library service. As a young student just out of library school, tremendously interested in the mission of the public library, I gave close attention to this address.

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The speaker first described the libraries of 1976 and then reviewed the stumbling steps by which the goal of complete coverage had been attained.

The most striking feature of this modern library service was the fact that the 6,000 independent libraries of 1938 had gradually been combined or federated into 600 library systems whose united service reached all parts of the nation. Every citizen had access to the books that he needed, for inspiration, for information and for recreation, and no future Lincoln would need to walk 20 miles for a book. These library systems varied greatly in size, geographically and also in population. Some served single large counties, others covered several counties, while many of them reached out from populous centers to serve large metropolitan areas. The various regions, however, had one marked characteristic in common, in that their outlines were not drawn on a map with ruler and pencil as many of the old county lines apparently had been determined. They were established rather as cohesive units that served logical trade areas or had natural geographical boundaries.

A second characteristic was the installation of new methods of taking books to the people. Branch libraries, deposit stations, and book wagons were still in use, but to these had been added new schemes in keeping with a modern world. Photostatic copies of library material were being sent to distant readers and airplanes were delivering books to places formerly inaccessible. Television made it possible to read extracts in books that were thousands of miles away, and a new and very low rate of postage on books sent to or from public libraries made books easily available to borrowers everywhere.

Those older readers who came to the library for their books also found many changes. The location and design of the buildings were in marked contrast to those of an earlier generation. No longer did the reader waste his breath climbing to a Greek temple atop the highest hill. He found his books in the market-place where the library was as accessible and as convenient as the best department

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store. Many of the later structures were attractively modernistic, with great bands of high windows throwing ample light on the readers' books. For the evening readers a generous supply of indirect light was provided, while comfortable furniture in air-conditioned rooms helped to make these buildings popular places in which to read and study.

Each central library maintained a room especially equipped for the storage and use of microfilms, those miniature books of the modern age. These collections included microfilm copies of rare books and manuscripts from all parts of the world, and each film room was provided with special tables holding projectors in which the tiny film pages were enlarged for the readers.

Cooperation between libraries and librarians was the third item emphasized by the speaker. Cooperation had been discussed as far back as the 1930's but it was many years before the idea developed into something more than words. By 1960 libraries had perfected systems of cooperative book buying and cooperative cataloging which were not only saving money but also providing better service. Specialization in book selection, too, had made great progress. Every regional library maintained one or more collections on special subjects pertinent to the region, and the value of these special collections had been greatly enhanced by the addition of appropriate books voluntarily surrendered and donated by other libraries. Union catalogs of books in neighboring libraries had grown rapidly in number, started first by the use of microfilm and kept up to date by the exchange of catalog cards. These various cooperative ventures made it possible to locate promptly many of the books needed by special students. They led to a tremendous increase in the use of interlibrary loans, and resulted in saving time, travel, and expense for authors and others engaged in research. Still another cooperative venture was the warehouse, or storage, plan. Many of the regional libraries and, in several cases, groups of regional libraries, had erected fireproof but inexpensive stack buildings on cheap sites, to which they relegated books that were out of date or seldom used.

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These books were still available when needed but the plan proved a bonanza to the overcrowded libraries, since the shelves in the regular library buildings could now be reserved for the standard works in all important fields of human interest and for the live and up-to-date books that were in constant demand by readers.

A fourth point was the high quality of the professional service offered the user of these delightful libraries. Laws for the certification of librarians had been enacted in all of the states and no longer was it possible to pension a broken-down teacher or clergyman, or reward a faithful political friend, by placing him in charge of a library. Legislators had at last discovered that the public should be protected from the bungling librarian as well as from the clumsy barber. These modern library workers were not only equipped with college and university education and library school training, but they also had special aptitude or preparation for their particular niche in the library's service. The Art librarian was something of an art amateur and student. The Technology librarian had majored in pure and applied science. Other assistants developed other specialties, so that the professional staff in the larger libraries was practically a faculty covering in general the field of human knowledge and prepared to render expert service to the readers and students who came to these informal educational institutions. This increasing competence in the library personnel brought to the institution not only the respect of the entire community but also larger funds and greater patronage.

The last feature mentioned by the speaker was the manner in which these modern libraries were maintained. Local autonomy was still in force and approximately 50 per cent of the library maintenance fund was provided by local taxation. The new idea in library financing was that the other 50 per cent of the fund was provided by state and federal grants given to libraries in recognition of their great service to education. Many of the states had been unable to attain the goal of complete library coverage, and so serve all of their people, until these grants became available.

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Under these five headings, then, the speaker outlined the main features of a service that fulfilled the purpose of the public library, as stated many years ago by Mrs. Fairchild, a pioneer teacher of library science: "The function of the library is the development and enrichment of life in the entire community by bringing to all the people the books that belong to them."

The latter part of the speaker's address reviewed the chief battles in the long fight for universal library service. It had been a strenuous campaign, starting in 1926 when the A.L.A. was only fifty years of age. The report of the Extension Committee presented at the semicentennial conference was the first serious national attempt to study the question. This comprehensive survey, discussing the existing distribution of library service, brought out the striking fact that library extension was almost entirely a rural problem, and showed that of the 45,000,000 people without library service nearly 40,000,000 lived in rural districts. Libraries had naturally developed first in the cities, where it was easier to maintain and to use them, while the people on farms and in the open spaces had been left to look out for themselves.

Thus the first battle was fought between the socially minded librarians and the rugged individualists. The individualists asked the question: "Why all this bother about the rural people? If they really want library service, don't you think that they will find the means and the methods of providing it for themselves?" The speaker said that this question recalled to his mind a book entitled *What social classes owe to each other*. Professor William Graham Sumner, the author of this volume, himself a rugged individualist, interpreted *laissez-faire* to mean "Mind your own business," which, he said, is the doctrine of liberty. He felt that social classes owed to each other only "good will, mutual respect, and mutual guaranties of liberty and security." He considered that the schemes of the reformers "could always be reduced to this type—that A and B decide what C shall do for D."

The librarians replied that rural residents did not seek library

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service because they had never had it and therefore did not realize what it might mean to them. When once they had a taste of it they refused to go back to the old bookless days and were willing to provide the funds needed for library support. Furthermore, said the librarians, they were "bothering" about library service for rural districts because democratic government would depend for its ultimate success upon the education of *all* the people and upon the widest diffusion of knowledge. Alexander Meiklejohn had said "democracy *is* education. In so far as we can educate the people we can have democracy." They stressed the interesting thought that our whole sum of knowledge is stored in books and that there is no other complete storehouse. If knowledge is power, then libraries are powerhouses. To state this thought in other words:

*Ideas* are the things that brought us out of the jungle;

*Language* is the vehicle by which ideas are conveyed;

*Print* is the invention by which language is preserved;

*Libraries* are the power plants where ideas in printed language are kept ready for your use and mine.

The second conflict in the battle of the books was over the size of the territory that could be efficiently covered by a single library system. The Extension report of 1926 had recommended the county as the logical unit, a natural conclusion because the county was the only governmental unit available, except the states themselves, and county libraries had met with marked success in California and a few other states. In 1936, however, the Extension Committee surveyed the accomplishments of its first decade and found that the results, at least in figures, were disappointing. Sixty million people had library service in 1926 as compared to 77 million in 1936, this increase of 17 million corresponding closely to the increase in population during the 10-year period. Out of a total of over 3,000 counties, less than 300 had complete library service in 1926. There was some slight gain during the decade but in 1936 the number of counties with full service was still under 300. Confronted by these facts the librarians began to take notice, since at this rate of progress

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the ultimate goal would be reached about the year 4000 A.D.

The failure of the county campaign may have been due partly to the depression of the 1930's, but the larger reason was the failure of county government itself. Waste and inefficiency had brought this particular branch of local government into disrepute. Counties had been laid out in the days of the oxcart and the stagecoach. They had no logical boundaries and many of them were too small or too poor to maintain independently such services as public health, public welfare, and public libraries. A writer of that period, Thomas H. Reed, put the matter tersely, as follows: "It is a slight exaggeration to say that our present form of county government was brought over on the Mayflower and is about as well adapted to modern metropolitan conditions as the Mayflower would be to compete with the Queen Mary, but it is not far from the truth."

Librarians, then, about 1938, began to seek larger units, a movement that was aided by experts on governmental problems, by other public services in similar quandaries, and by state planning boards.

This idea met with a friendly hearing also because of the success of several demonstration libraries inaugurated in the 1930's and 1940's for territories much larger than counties. British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, and Vermont were pioneers in such demonstrations. These demonstration libraries exhibited their wares, rendered their service, the people were convinced, and the answer was "Sold." They proved that larger units meant economy, while at the same time they provided better book collections and a more efficient staff and service.

In the 1940's the movement gained considerable momentum and a few progressive states took the bull by the horns, abolished the old counties, and established in their place regional governments of larger size and more natural boundaries. Similar plans promoted in other states were blocked by the politicians, but here the libraries found other methods. A few state legislatures established library districts *ad hoc*, with provisions for governing boards and power to



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raise funds. Still another plan used in some sections was the grouping of several counties by contract into a unified library system.

The third hurdle to be overcome was the popular impression that any person can run a library. Schools for the training of librarians had been in existence for several decades, but many libraries were inefficiently managed by incompetent people until state laws for the certification of librarians were enacted. Many of the library schools were connected with state universities and it finally became apparent, even to the politicians, that it was an economic waste to allow this training, paid for by the state, to lie idle while the libraries needed trained workers. At first blush it might seem that the certification of librarians had little connection with library extension. On the contrary, however, the movement rapidly gained headway from the impetus brought to it by these educated, trained, and enthusiastic young workers.

The last battle of the campaign, but perhaps the most vital, was the long fight for federal and state aid for library service. This idea was for some time vigorously opposed by those who clung to the theory of states' rights and by those who believed that local autonomy would be destroyed. Again the speaker showed the thought of the time by quoting from Thomas H. Reed: "The concept of the right of local self-government and its universal efficacy have been so deeply ingrained in the public mind in relation to the existing units of government that it can not realize that progress has wrought a change in the definition of what is local."

In the 1940's, plans for federal and state aid gained headway, being greatly aided by the state library commissions, by the federal library agency established in 1936, and by groups of citizens organized to promote libraries and calling themselves "Friends of Libraries."

Three principal arguments were successfully used in this last campaign. Federal and state grants would serve as stimulating funds, they could be so allocated as to promote an equalization of library service, and they were justified on the ground that public li-

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brary service was a fundamental feature of our provision for public education.

These, said the speaker, were the four great battles in the march toward bigger and better libraries. In closing, he paid his respects to the veterans of the campaign, to A.L.A. headquarters and committees, to the state library commissions and the "Friends of Libraries," to the Commissioner of Education and to the individuals and organizations whose vision and donations had made possible those living examples, the regional library demonstrations. These constituted the army that had fought successfully in order to provide *"The best reading for the largest number at the least cost."*

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# *Standards for the Public Library Book Collection*

BY CARL B. RODEN

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IT IS NOT altogether easy to speculate upon the book collections in the library of tomorrow without a rather general orientation in the functions and objectives of that institution as they may differ from those of today. This volume is dedicated to the proposition that there will be a difference between the old and a new conception of such functions and objectives, and that old standards, of book collections as well as of other elements of library organization, will undergo some sort of change or revision. A library has been defined by one of the wise men of our craft as a collection of books assembled for use, as against collections assembled for sale, for display, for the pride of possession, or for any other of the purposes for which books may be assembled. The same learned commentator points out that the function or use of books that makes them a library may be: for instruction, for entertainment, or for "handing down," by which, presumably, is meant preserving books for the benefit of future generations. This definition may not be very profound in its analysis of the functions of a library, but it is at least comprehensive and affords a fairly convenient starting point for the consideration of standards for library book collections.

Books are the foundation of any library, and every library must

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have standards for the selection of its books if only for the reason that there are more books now in the world, and still more appearing day by day, than any single library can possibly buy or house or find use for, except possibly for the purpose of "handing down." That, however, is, fortunately, the duty of a very small number, such as the great and inclusive reference libraries, and the copyright depositories charged with the immense task of storing books for a legal record of their publication. The library of tomorrow that is here under particular contemplation is, we may assume, the free public library, established for the service of a whole community; and that institution is, or should be, very little concerned with building book collections for posterity, and much more with providing its contemporary constituency with the books useful to it—for instruction and entertainment.

To say that the public library is established for the service of the whole community is to state a broad and theoretical truth. Actually, of course, the portion of the population that makes use of its library facilities is distinctly and rather definitely limited. One limitation upon the ambition of the local library to serve all persons is imposed by the fact that not all persons are inclined to reading, and that the reading habit is far from a natural or universal gift, but is an acquired skill not too common even in a wholly literate population. A registration of 25 per cent of the population as library cardholders is a high average, and even possession of a library card does not always mean continuous library use. At the present time, for example, a serious and unaccountable drop in library use, out of all proportion to the number of recorded cardholders, is perplexing public librarians the country over.

Another limitation of an entirely different character arises out of the proverbial inadequacy of the means and resources with which the library attempts to carry on, and at the same time to extend, its services, as it constantly strives to do. Between these two limitations there are many variations in reading abilities, and many levels in reading interests and tastes, on the one hand, and in the

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degree to which the library may undertake to allot its scanty means in the service of each, or of those which it recognizes as the more legitimate and more urgent. There is, therefore, plenty of room for difference of opinion as to what a good library book collection should consist of and how it should be administered. The competing claims of different groups of readers, the so-called "demands" of the public—to which we still pay altogether too much heed—and the general relation of the two principal library functions of instruction and entertainment, along with the ever-present insufficiency of funds that makes it impossible to do all and to serve all and enforces a state of incessant compromise—all these combine to impart to the standards, for book collections as well as for other library activities, a degree of fluctuation and inconstancy which, it is to be hoped, the library of the future will find a way to reduce if not to eliminate.

The public library makes no secret of the fact that it is a product of the horse-and-buggy age, when books were scarce and not easy to come by, when the use of books was mostly for serious purposes, and when even the borrowing of books was the privilege of the few. A study of its origins discloses that in England, the land of its birth, as well as in America, to which it was soon transplanted, it was intended as a strictly educational institution. In England it was directly sponsored by the workers, or such of them as could read, whom the Industrial Revolution with its laborsaving machines had deprived of a livelihood and who realized the need of more knowledge and training in new vocations and new methods for the old in order to hold their own. In America it was quite commonly regarded and accepted as a sort of continuation of the public school system by which adults could carry on the learning process if they were so inclined.

But it was soon realized that this new agency, offering a new and untried public service, could make its way much more rapidly and attract to its doors a much larger number of patrons by leveling off its standards to the desires and interests of a wider circle than that

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embracing the learners alone. Thus the entertainment or recreational function joined the educational one and very soon exceeded the latter in popularity and in measure of its growth. And thus the American public library entered upon its long career of progress, development and, in the period of the Carnegie benefactions, of vast expansion, without serious interruption and without much questioning of its functions or objectives, either by the body politic or by itself. During the late distressful years, it is true, the public library was subjected to certain disturbing experiences at the hands of officials harassed with the problem of reconciling shrinking revenues with the unshrinkable costs of government and inclined to draw fine distinctions between the "essential" and "nonessential" public services. But, on the whole, the libraries came off very well in these scrutinies, and may one day look back upon the Depression as an ordeal not without many wholesome lessons and reactions to counterbalance its pains and discomforts.

One of these reactions manifests itself in the mood of self-examination into which the public library has now entered of its own volition, and to which these chapters bear witness. Whether that tomorrow toward which they are dedicated will in reality disclose itself as a new era or will be only a long period of readjustment, leading ultimately to a return to former standards, it is, in any event, a useful and profitable exercise for the public library to pause for a brief retrospect and a longer look ahead and thus to try to forecast the opportunities and responsibilities of the future and how far they may depart from those of the past. What follows is offered as a fragmentary, tentative and wholly subjective contribution toward that end.

It is not unlikely that book collections will in the future tend to grow smaller rather than larger—smaller, that is to say, in the number of new books or titles added, but larger in the number of copies supplied for current use. In 1851, George Ticknor, that eminent Bostonian to whose energetic promotion the Boston Public Library largely owes its establishment, formulated a program for

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the new institution which, among other advanced and enlightened ideas, contained the interesting proposition that a public library should provide "popular books . . . in such numbers of copies that many persons . . . could be reading the same work at the same time," and should include not only such books as would tend to "moral and intellectual improvement" but the "pleasant literature of the day." This is still a fair statement of the aspiration of every public library, but of an aspiration constantly circumscribed by the lack of funds and a task that becomes one of rigid selection and the exercise of much judgment and discrimination. It involves not only the problem of deciding which books among the many are to be added, but also that of deciding which are to be duplicated to the limited extent that the library budget will permit. It is likely to be somewhat simplified, hereafter, by the establishment of a new standard of book selection, in the form of a line of demarcation between the reasonably "permanent" among the current output of books and those that are clearly of passing and temporary interest often stimulated by publicity and other external influences.

Such a line would by no means correspond to any distinction between recreational and "educational" books, nor fiction and non-fiction. For, in the first place, not all fiction is recreational, nor is all nonfiction necessarily educational; and neither does the latter always represent a contribution to knowledge of permanent worth nor the former in all cases a contribution to mere entertainment. Both kinds will continue to be carried in public libraries and both will be duplicated so that the "pleasant literature of the day," whatever that may be taken to include, will still be made available to readers. But readers are also of both kinds and it seems likely that a shift of emphasis will take place in the service of one kind against the other. The public library is organized for the service of the common reader—a useful and comprehensive designation of a large and varied group with many interests, many tastes, many degrees of literary appreciation. For him it will undertake to provide a service on as high a level as possible but a level of its own creation,

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without either the peaks that denote the specialist or the valleys that signify a compromise with its standards as represented in the level to which it means to adhere. It will be prepared and eager to multiply and intensify its services upon that level, but will be less and less concerned with that part of the reading public whose capacities for the use and enjoyment of books manifest themselves only in demands for the ephemeral and the inferior.

Indications are multiplying that that part of the entertainment function of the public library which was fulfilled only by a constant flow of best sellers is plainly subsiding, and, moreover, that this phenomenon is not, as was for a time assumed, due only to the failure of the library supply in the years of diminished book funds. Other attractions—aside from the commercial lending libraries which absorbed a considerable part of this patronage—the broadcast, the film, the serialization of new novels in the magazines, and perhaps a whole new conception of recreation and entertainment in this restless age, combined to decimate the ranks of the library fiction patrons. And indications are likewise multiplying that the libraries are accepting these defections with something less than despair. Recent library reports record the restriction of fiction purchases to a hundred or two out of the fifteen to eighteen hundred annually produced in this country alone, and bear no evidence of any consciousness of a loss of efficiency or of self-respect. Their chief loss will be in the circulation figures, in which millions may for a time give way to less imposing digits, but their gains will be reckoned in the corresponding rebound in the book appropriations released for services of more permanent effect and satisfaction.

One of the satisfactions thus made possible will be in the heavier duplication of those new fiction titles that will pass the test and find their way to the library shelves. But the same principle will be applied with even greater satisfaction to that other category of literature known to librarians by the inclusive and most inadequate name of nonfiction. Here also the process of selection will be a much more rigid one, resulting in lesser and more deliberate ac-



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quisitions of the new and a correspondingly more informed attitude to the old. Librarians will become less responsive to the pressure of isolated and sporadic "demands" for books which from their nature will be of too limited use to a collection to serve the common reader upon a common level. The public library will abandon any ambitions it may have entertained to serve the expert in any field of research or to assemble complete or "special" collections in any field of knowledge. It will recognize more clearly than ever before that its sole duty and absorbing task is that of providing—in the words of the expansive A.L.A. motto—"the best books for the largest number, at the least cost"—a duty still valid and a task still far from fulfillment.

Standards for the book collection in the library of tomorrow will, it is predicted, place greater emphasis upon its educational function. Relations with recognized educational activities, both formal and informal, will become more direct and intimate, and all book services to the public institutions, the schools, hospitals and others, will one day be consolidated in the public library as the center of expert knowledge and procedure. Library service for children will eventually be transferred to the schools, to be combined with the school library, but both to be conducted by competent members of the public library staff, trained in the skills and doctrines of the children's librarian.

The public library will greatly expand its services to students, especially in groups, by providing for them their required books in quantities for group use—always excepting the textbooks which must be the students' constant companions. But the collateral material, so far as found in current books, and which plays so large a part in modern educational practice, will be made more freely available and will be as heavily duplicated as may be required. The books used in university extension, and other extracurricular courses to which the general public is admitted, will be thus supplied by the libraries to which that public has the right to look for such service; and it is rashly predicted that this undertaking will prove

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far less impractical and burdensome than is generally assumed. There will, moreover, be a tendency to recognize seasonal demands for books which will lead to the organization of quantity supplies, to be stored against recurring need.

In general, the principle of the heavy duplication of a relatively small but competently selected stock of what may be called the essential books on all subjects within the scope of the library and the interests of the common reader would seem to be indicated as one of the leading characteristics of tomorrow's library. There will be a firmer tendency to assert the authority of the institution in determining what the essential books are, and the addition of new titles to this nucleus will be a process involving the exercise of a sound and informed judgment and of complete liberty of decision. And a second, collateral, and equally important process—that of discarding—will be developed to equal efficiency and with equal judgment, and will be rigorously applied to keep the book collection up to the standards set for it. The public library, as before suggested, has no duty to keep books on its shelves that have become obsolete or have otherwise outlived their usefulness. The function of "handing down" belongs to another type of library and in the average public library too easily becomes mere hoarding. This is not to be taken as a warrant for indiscriminate discarding, of which the classic example is furnished by the Bodleian Library which disposed of the First Folio of Shakespeare when the second was received—and succeeded in retrieving its error only after several centuries. But discarding is, nonetheless, as important in keeping a book collection "alive" as addition, and will one day be as systematically practiced.

Incidentally, the processes of scrutiny, selection and discarding will apply with equal force and effect to books offered as gifts, by authors seeking to honor themselves in honoring the library with their compositions, or by other persons with motives less simple and unmixed. The library has the same right to exercise its judgment and follow its established standards in the admission of these

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offerings as it asserts and exercises in its purchases, and will greatly profit by insisting thereon.

These desultory and insubstantial speculations have no other purpose than to indicate the belief of one observer that the future of the public library will be characterized by a larger measure both of conservatism and conservation than it has permitted itself to practice in the expansive days that are gone; that quality, of the book collection as well as of service, will hold a larger place in its policies than quantity, and that numbers of books, as well as of readers, will become less important than the levels upon which the twain shall meet. Thereby the public library will not merely consolidate its present position in the public regard, but will greatly enhance it; until at long last it will achieve—what it has long deserved but only fitfully enjoyed—ready and convinced acceptance as one of the indispensable services that must and will be maintained and generously supported for its essential and enduring values.

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## *The Librarian of the Future*

BY CHARLES E. RUSH

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ACCORDING to the word of G. K. Chesterton, humanity has a favorite game in which the people listen with respect to all that is said of the future by men who assume, or are alleged, to be wise. Around the knees of the philosophers and the prophets they gather with reverence to learn how this and that must inevitably come to pass. Having heard all the predictions, they promptly set forth to accomplish something quite different. They call this game, "Cheat the Prophet."

Nevertheless, the hope of seeing their dreams realized springs eternal among those who attempt to forecast events. It seems difficult to discourage not only a minor prophet but also a modest dreamer. Even the latter, basing his guesses upon generally known conditions and indications of the present, may be tempted to chart probable trends and paths on an imaginary map of an unknown country without fear of being called to account in person after half a century. If he can mark a course without pronouncement, if he can indicate lines of accomplishment without being dogmatic, he may be forgiven if his outline fails to check with the official guides of 50 years hence.

It may seem strange that 50 years ago the fathers of the modern library movement in America did not overindulge in prophecy.

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Perhaps pioneers are too busily engaged in hewing virgin timber and blazing new trails to speculate on the unknown. It would be stimulating to know what those men visualized for the librarians of today, particularly in the words of Cutter, the scholar and cataloger, Dewey, the teacher and classifier, Poole, the organizer and indexer, Billings, the director and bibliographer, and Bowker, the publisher and editor. However, the tremendously significant achievements of the founders did lay the foundation for the notable progress of their successors, which, combined with recent advancement, must necessarily lead to certain important future developments, requiring a personnel of a high order and superior to that of the present.

Like other pioneers and founders, they were men of action and achievement. Being not greatly concerned about the future, they apparently were not exercised over the formulation of a stated philosophy, or any minute description of their faiths and beliefs. They simply accomplished results, by using their ideals as targets, confident that the practice of library science would develop into the art of librarianship. Doubtless many students will attempt to delve into their whys and wherefores as a fair exercise in near future training. Meanwhile, the current call in many professions for formalized sets of philosophic guideposts will increase until they are outmoded, just as were their predecessors, the pledges of organizations, oaths of societies and codes of ethics. Time will convince us that creeds limit action and petrify thought, and that few other devices in all the world are more difficult to revise and keep up to date. There are grave implications in trying to follow instructions on driving an oxcart while attempting to fly a plane.

The future holds exciting possibilities for librarians. Librarianship is a comparatively new educational profession. Little more than the seacoast of the library world has been explored. Many blazed trails lead to new adventures in the interior where horizon follows horizon. Few other social agencies can anticipate as widespread opportunity for general expansion and as great development

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of educational services, not only in new territory and new outposts, but also in the partially established centers.

We have found that a library is not an end in itself, but a means to many ends, and that the great need is not for fewer librarians, but for more good librarians. These will appear in response to the call for a leadership capable of adapting and integrating library functions with those of other educational activities, all of which face common problems and seek identical goals. The opportunity lies in devising synchronization.

New and changing conceptions of the application of the power of recorded ideas to the needs of readers will open new areas of opportunity, and will require of those who serve them the fullest possible development of personal ability and social understanding. These will further demonstrate that the library approaches the ideal of a democratic institution, depending on and contributing to the enlightenment of the people, and the vitality of their cultural ideas. The expansion, coordination, adequate financing and direction of such functions and activities, providing continuous educational encouragement without compulsion, censorship or bias, will develop a new type of librarianship, seeking participation with other social forces concerned with the progress and welfare of the people. Neither the value of ideas, nor the books which contain them, can be measured, but a progressive society without benefit of books is unthinkable. What a man reads he largely is, and the more complex he finds civilization the greater is his need for guidance by the best thought expressed in print.

Related new outlooks and fresh approaches to library responsibilities will result in frequent reorganization of existing facilities and continuous modification of service to provide more equalized library opportunity, greater diffusion of facts and ideas, guidance in planning and pursuing individual reading and study, stimulation of intellectual curiosity and interests, encouragement of both appreciation and production in cultural fields, as well as the promotion of books as useful tools for the student, worker and citizen.

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The selection and use of reading materials for these enlivening outlets will require emphasis on the things of importance and the curtailment of technical details which year after year seem less essential.

Frequently we are told that we are living in a transition period. This hoary discovery is announced by each succeeding generation, a practice which we fervently hope will continue throughout future ages. Fortunately, youth is impatient and adversely critical, impetuously seeking change and improvement. Youth courageously speaks of revolution and secretly envisages the complete destruction of current systems and practices, but soon accepts comfortably the inevitable evolutions which appear in course. At the moment, slow but far-reaching educational reform is just around the corner. With it must come important revision of library procedure in which its functions will rest upon the specific aims of the community or institution served, but civilization itself and its fundamental institutions will withstand the storms of immediate dark days. The younger generation usually fails to realize that the so-called fads of procedure are logical outgrowths of a preceding development, which easily can be understood by retrospective study and appreciation. To be constructively critical is a far different and more difficult matter, out of which come important departures due to the keenness of young librarians to escape the mechanical aspects of service, to undertake new ventures, and to view librarianship in a new light. The extraordinary advances of the library profession during recent decades have naturally created new problems which for solution will require the same commonsense approach that created them. Application to these challenging situations will produce a generation of giants in the library field.

Each new profession must for a time endure the barbed criticisms of other professional groups while struggling for scholarly recognition and imaginary levels of respectability. For librarians this struggle has been peculiarly difficult, due to their close contact with other educational colleagues and the wide scope of their activities,

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which serve the life span of their clientele. Librarians are obliged to be all things to all men and to be encyclopedic in their interests and knowledge. Out of this necessity there arises the criticism that librarianship generally is not performed by a learned profession, and the indictment that it is weak in scholarship and in scholarly attainment, a frequently just and lamentably true judgment. But it ill behooves a specialist in an increasingly narrow intellectual field to throw stones at those educators whom he considers uneducated, for he is likely thereby to exhibit his own limitations. A fundamental knowledge of subject fields and a familiarity with the literatures of particular subjects are often better evidences of scholarly learning than a facility to manipulate research formulas and techniques, particularly when the results of the latter seldom interest anyone but the manipulator. More scholarship is needed in library work, but the need is on the service side rather than the creative. Librarians, however, cannot encompass all knowledge, but their daily contact with readers and books of all kinds will necessarily sensitize their interest in all things, liberalizing their own thoughts, aptitudes and ideals. Few compensations in life can be greater.

The processes of assembling, organizing, preserving and utilizing the records of civilization as sources of power and enlightenment require and develop a command of experience and of judgment, an appraisal of intrinsic cultural qualities, a facility to stimulate interests and satisfy needs, and a proficiency in the practical application of books as tools of trade and learning. These educational possibilities are indicative of the importance of the personnel element in the library movement. Further development of the principles of librarianship will appear as the necessary preliminary and professional training widens to include more fundamental knowledge, and as administrative responsibilities expand to include a broad and sympathetic comprehension of the cultural opportunities within the library field. The purposeful use of print to promote self-instruction, implement education, and aid research



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will stimulate librarians to assert themselves in order to gain their objectives, and thus cast aside their characteristic timidity. In so doing some precious heritage of the past may be lost, notwithstanding the biblical assurances for those who are unduly modest. Those who effectively and unselfishly serve the intellect are worthy of their hire.

The future librarian will be an interesting composite, having many of the qualifications of a sociologist, psychologist, teacher, historian and bibliographer. He will understand people as well as literature; know reading habits and interests; share his knowledge of books and their effective use; give counsel and advice regarding ideas as well as print; be familiar with the best thought in the fields of learning and instruction; be competent to coordinate related activities; keep abreast of progress in the arts and sciences; maintain a constructively critical attitude toward public issues; protect the right of freedom of expression; participate in cooperative social enterprises; assist in keeping knowledge up to date in available and readable form; help simplify the use of an increasingly complex body of material; lengthen the period of learning with more universal education at the lower levels and more widespread education at the upper levels; utilize new means of reproducing books and related materials, and devise new ways of disseminating information and ideas. His age will be one of federation and co-operation; concentration and coordination of resources, local initiative and control; state and federal aid; close relations with other public services; and special funds for the advancement of knowledge and the promotion of research.

In this development the library will become a dynamic institution, and be recognized as an indispensable agency, where socially useful books will be easily accessible to all ages and levels of educational attainment. The minimum cultural equipment of that future day would now seem to be maximum extravagance. With changing conceptions of values and objectives there must come a more competent leadership exhibiting strength of character, intellectual curi-

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osity, enthusiastic vision, forceful personality, administrative ability, and freedom from prejudice and tradition. Should there be any question regarding these paragons, look to the future. Leading spirits will be recruited from the social and natural sciences to accept the awakening challenge of new library opportunities, if the successors of our professional library training agencies and the graduate schools of the leading universities fail to meet the need.

Too much is often expected of new movements, new organizations and new schools. Enthusiasm is a blessed but hard taskmaster. In good time we shall see several excellent library schools emerge from the present critical period in which their nature and objectives are undergoing searching examination. Similar crises are facing other types of special schools and institutions of higher learning, including the best graduate schools. In the survival of traditional form and practice, we have seen ideals harden into conventions, routine become sacred, instruction handicap learning, and fundamental knowledge and interpretation eclipsed by formalized skills of investigation. Where the research type of study has succeeded apprenticeship instruction, there is a tendency to over-professionalize scholarship, adopt a protective cover of patter and jargon, lay down specified patterns of study, accumulate irrelevant facts and unwanted statistics, and define such increasingly narrow fields of investigation that the previously replowed ground need only be raked over to disclose a few dry clods of culture. Such research soon grows intolerant and becomes a millstone around the neck of liberal education. As increasing numbers of vocational groups adopt the phraseology and patterns of research, the term "research" will fall from misuse into oblivion, leaving far too many schools on a slender, dry limb of the tree of knowledge.

In the higher education of a librarian there is a need for genuine, scientific study, in which the emphasis is placed on the content and use of scholarship rather than on the techniques of its further subdivision. In this new approach, artificial patterns and irrelevant standards will be eliminated, and trivialities will not be stressed as

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essentials. The prevailing training agencies will broaden their scope, emphasize fundamental subjects, apply principles rather than difficult procedure, adapt learning facilities to individual needs and offer opportunities for intellectual growth, preparatory to an intellectual career requiring extra-competence, poise and perspective. We shall see throughout the realm of higher education a breaking away from the stereotyped conception of the doctorate, and a decreasing valuation of the typical M.A. degree. Learning will gain new significance and value, and advanced training will become an opportunity to stimulate special interests and strengthen conceptions of first principles.

As long as we have changing intellectual needs, we shall have disturbing problems in professional education, for the latter seldom keeps pace with the former. Library training is still in its formative stage, confronted with the widest of fields and a shortage of funds, attempting to include in its curriculum not only its own body of subject matter and techniques but also instruction relative to community organization, local government, educational objectives and a score of related subjects. Unquestionably, this wide variety of subjects and diversity of methods are its most hopeful indications for the future. The nature of the future is foreshadowed by a breaking down of teaching methods in favor of learning opportunities, and much of that which is traditional and perfunctory in favor of independent study by those of recognized ability and capable of assuming responsibility for their own freedom. There are indications, too, of a more nearly complete integration of the schools with the life of the universities with which they are associated. Perhaps a few of the present library techniques will survive the demand that they be both efficient and fit specific standards. As in the schools of education, there is a reaction against dry-as-dust courses and the tendency to evaluate training above competency, and education above knowledge. Library training at its worst has been better than the training given to college and university teachers. Higher educational institutions have depended on luck for their Bliss Perrys and

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Billy Phelps, but the same has seemingly been true of the library field, with its Bishops, Lydenbergs and Wilsons. Library training has savored too much of the vocational school and apprentice class, offering too little of a true professional teaching agency centering on creative and reflective thought. The creative sidelights of librarianship are being discovered and utilized, out of which will develop a content rich in intellectual discipline.

Further emphasis in graduate library schools will be laid on adequate qualifications for admission, on standards of performance, and on type and quality of instruction. Good teaching by leading spirits of the time, and an adequate conception of what a professional school should be, are two all-important problems for early solution. Library work is far from being a homogeneous career, as it demands a great variety of qualifications, temperament and even physical characteristics to satisfy its diversified character. In training there will be a clearer separation between preparation for work in popular libraries and that in research libraries. The schools will be affected by a probable new and unofficial grouping by the profession itself, in which there will be distinctions between professional, technical and clerical workers. The first of these three classes may not be trained as routine operatives, receiving misplaced emphasis on materials, devices and methods, to the exclusion of interest in subject matter. The problem then will be how to train workers, stimulate leaders and teach scholars. Nevertheless, far into the future the quantity need will call for intelligent and socially minded librarians who are prepared with fundamental knowledge and technical skills, but whose preliminary education and purpose limit their early fields to assistantships. Certification by state laws to improve service, raise standards and discourage unfit appointments will play an important part in this picture. Similar to the breaking away from technical courses in other professional schools, the routine instruction in library schools will be transformed into desirable means for mental development, by approaching processes as illustrations of principles and ideals, and by leaving syntheses of appli-

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cation to the student. Much of library method can be learned in practice and such experience has value, but true and full weight cannot be given it without an understanding of its character and its application elsewhere. As the schools broaden, grow less complex, adjust themselves to changing conditions, provide basic offerings and develop opportunities for specialization, there will be less inquiry into ways and means to encourage those who seek an individual approach to library service through other training agencies than the library school. Even so, a master of a sloop must know his ropes, a doctor must study beyond purpose in medicine, and a lawyer must base his practice on more than legal theory. Librarians likewise must have adequate practice in knot tying, case study and internship service. Otherwise they may not be prepared to withstand the confusion in the temples of knowledge, the famine of thought in the land, the babel of partial comprehension, and the thirst for the fullest dissemination of ideas in the midst of plenty.

There can be no settling down in comfort among permanently established procedures, for the utilization of organized knowledge in educational service suited to the needs of society requires constant adaptation. In the past librarians have been tempted to "glorify their faults under blazing banners of tradition." Custom, tradition and previous practice will rise and fall, but their hindrance to progress will gradually decrease. We shall witness less temptation and glorification. Also there will be less confusion of ideals and illusions. An ideal, born of an idea and fused with feeling, influences action and becomes real when it vitalizes conduct. The librarian of the future will be rich in opportunity, ideas and enthusiasm. He also will be blessed with the human capacity to dream dreams and the good fortune to see many of them realized. He will be measured by the degree with which his library provides intellectual stimulation and liberalizing culture, leading to a better understanding of life's problems and joys. His most important duty will be to live helpfully. In that activity he will rejoice exceedingly in his calling, and retrospectively understand the confident hope of his predecessors.

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## *Housing Tomorrow's Library*

BY JOHN ADAMS LOWE

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HE WHO PLANS the building of the public library of the future has before him an adventurous experiment. He will be called upon to house a "center of creative learning."

The public library is today in what has been called "the stage of envisioning possibilities" as to its scope and functions. But it has sufficiently established itself as a creative agency in the intellectual movements of the community to warrant planning on the lines of informal education.

The day was when the builder of a public library was asked to plan a storehouse of books in which the records of human knowledge might be collected and preserved. Later, librarians had a dominating purpose to circulate books. Their ambition was to find a reader for every book on the shelves, and a book for every reader in the community. This gave rise to branch libraries, distributing and delivery stations for the purpose of increasing the accessibility of the resources of the library. Results were measured by statistics of books circulated. From a passive receptacle the public library became an aggressive agent for distributing information.

As an instrument of communication, the public library is now moving into a third phase of development, a qualitative one, in which it seeks to serve as a guide to the records of human knowl-

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edge. Circulation alone is no longer its comprehensive function; rather it offers to direct the individual to books which serve his particular needs of the moment. That is, the library is not only an instrument of informative education; it is also, in fact, a *method* of education. Libraries, like laboratories, are workshops which operate under the direction of a trained personnel. In them, the individual may learn to solve the problems of his particular social situation by recourse to the accumulated experience of others.

The function of the library of the future will be to supply the opportunity and the means for self-education, based on the truth of James Russell Lowell's dictum that "the better part of every man's education is that which he gives himself." This ideal presupposes authoritative book knowledge on the part of the librarian and an arrangement of the library's resources that makes them conveniently accessible to the reader. By such means are skilful guidance and wise selection of reading made possible—the reading guidance of groups as well as of individuals.

Attainment of this goal will definitely affect the layout of the library building. In the small library with limited book collection and relatively few demands made upon it, only a limited specialization will be necessary. Larger institutions, however, will require specialization of staff and segregation of the books in order that each member may know the literature of his own subject more intimately than he could possibly know the entire collection, and that all resources may be brought together as closely as possible for convenient use.

There are tendencies in the development of the library which clearly indicate that this ideal is entirely sound and practical. Gradually larger and larger book collections have appeared on open shelves, and the reader has been given more and more access to all resources. Some of the larger buildings of the past decade have been planned for the arrangement of the books on open shelves in a segregated subject division arrangement, with the purpose of more intensified personal service to readers. So satisfactory has this type of

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assistance been found by the public which has had the opportunity to experience it, that it may be expected to be the basis of public library planning in the future.

The subject division idea is based on the obvious fact that intelligent service to the public will result if all the material—circulating and reference books, bound and current periodicals, documents, pamphlets, vertical file material—dealing with a given field is collected in one place and is administered by assistants especially trained in that subject and familiar with its literature.

This would indicate that in future buildings provision will be made for adequate storage of books and ample space be allowed for their distribution, as formerly, but books will no longer dominate the layout of space. Consideration will be given primarily to the convenience of the people who are to use the building. The idea of monuments has given way to the idea of utility. The main service floor, for example, will be placed as near the sidewalk level as possible so that readers will not have to climb unnecessary steps. The books will be arranged in subject divisions on the main floor to provide specialized guidance service. The book storage stack will be placed directly beneath the main service floor and horizontal rather than vertical through the building. Interior bearing partitions will be sparingly used, in order to insure good ventilation, diffusion of light, flexibility of layout and ease in remodeling to meet new functional demands. Artificial illumination by direct and semidirect fixtures will do away with shadows, unpleasant glare, eternally unsatisfactory table lighting fixtures and impossible card catalog lighting. Every building of any considerable size will be adequately air conditioned to control both humidity and temperature. This will include the stack. Sound-absorbing materials on walls, ceilings and floors will assure quiet for readers everywhere. Large or small, the building will present a friendly and inviting openness and beauty, without and within.

A reader may expect to walk in on the sidewalk level, just as he is accustomed to do in banks, stores, theaters and other buildings



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planned for the accommodation of many people. He will pass through a vestibule and come at once into a central hall, encircled by a series of divisional reading rooms.

The open space of the hall permits the centralization of traffic and control in this area. It offers great advantages over the arrangement which placed the stack in the center, necessitating corridors around and through which people must go to reach any part of the building. Just inside the entrance to this room are the Circulation and Registration desks, at which are concentrated routine and distribution. The Information Assistant and the Readers Adviser are prominently located near the main catalog. Readers cross and recross in going from one division to another without disturbing anyone.

From the central hall one looks directly into the divisions. These are practically rectangular rooms made by wall shelving arranged straight along one side and in alcoves along the other. Tables and chairs between facilitate consultation and study of the books on the shelves. Near the entrance of each division is the desk of the librarian. Immediately behind it is a glass-screened workroom or office. Here routine is carried on, but any staff member so employed may be called to the desk instantly as need arises. From the workroom a short stair leads to the stack beneath and makes quickly available all the storage collection of this subject. Vertical files and card catalog cabinets are near at hand. Bulletin boards and display racks call attention to timely reading. Some divisions will gather collections of pictures and maps as part of their equipment, while others will need special tables for industrial and financial services and periodical indexes. When he has found what he wants to take home with him, the reader stops on his way out and has the book charged near the exit in the central hall.

The number and nature of divisions will depend entirely upon the size of the library and the funds available for maintenance. It may be that some fortunate librarian will find that he can carry his divisions through the entire collection and arrange for fiction, liter-

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ature, biography, history, education and religion, social sciences, business and economics, science and technology, fine arts and even local history. As the library grows some divisions may become more important than others, because of the local interest or because of an endowment.

Many readers will be coming to the library who do not wish to study in the divisions but merely to read the popular magazines. They will not require tables on which to make notes or compare texts. The library of tomorrow will provide a popular magazine reading room with comfortable chairs arranged in groups around small tables, giving something of the appearance of a club lounge. Current magazines will be found in transparent covers on sloping shelves along the walls. Even among these casual readers the assistant in charge of the room will find some opportunity for guidance by becoming acquainted with their tastes and interests.

Every library will need a Young People's Room. This may well be considered a part of the adult divisions and placed close to but separated a little from the fiction division. Thus it will emphasize to the adolescent the library's recognition of his complete independence and his attainment of "adulthood." It is not another department through which he must pass before he achieves full use of the entire library. Its use is optional, not obligatory. When he leaves the Children's Room and becomes an adult borrower, all the resources of the library are open to him. This room, providing in its book selection a well-balanced cross section of all adult divisions, serves merely as an introduction to them. Arm chairs, individual tables, comfortable upholstered leather benches, floor lamps, and books everywhere, at one's elbow, on low shelves, create an atmosphere conducive to browsing and leisurely reading. The staff of this room will have a special sort of information about adult books suitable for the reading of young people of high school age. Equipment must be provided for bibliographies, indexes, and pamphlet material which will come into play here as it does in the other divisions. Reading clubs will probably develop among the patrons of this

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room and one or more club rooms might well be considered in connection with it.

Librarians will continue to stress the importance of work with children. Indeed the principles behind our ideal library of the future are as applicable to boys and girls as they are to adults. More and better space is going to be assigned to children in the buildings of tomorrow. There may come a need for several adjoining rooms, instead of a little cramped space in the basement. I should like to see the Children's Room made one of the most charming in the building. It must not be a nursery, but a room whose memories will always create for the child something of loveliness associated with reading.

Perhaps it will be possible to plan this room where it may have ample windows with a sunny exposure. Bright draperies will add to the cheerfulness. Walls of soft greyish blue will give a pleasing background for bright books in recessed wall shelving. If a fireplace is permitted, make it generous and let it accent the entire room and gather round it comfortable davenports in bright leather. Furniture may be as casual as you like, anything that makes the room home-like and friendly to children. Rich yellow-red maple in early American design may work in well with the scheme and be found practical for wearing qualities. No long tables with chairs pushed stiffly under them belong in this room. Armchairs, individual tables, showcases, sloped-top tables with benches for small readers, and sloping shelves for heavy books like encyclopedias and dictionaries meet demands made by the various ages of readers who will gather here. And of course there must be a card catalog and a typical circulation desk at which books may be charged and returned, for children must get acquainted with routines they will have to use later.

Some librarians will tell you that children should never go upstairs and that they should have a separate entrance. I am convinced that boys and girls can be taught to come and go in the building without annoying adults. They will come to know the restrictions the building imposes upon them and the reasons for them. They

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accept them and feel at home and content in their own rooms. Stairways and corridors can be built so that little sound is carried. I would advocate only one entrance for the entire building. This is for economy and ease of administration, but it is also a recognition of the right of all the people to use the building on a common basis. Not all rooms are now open to the boys and girls, to be sure, but they should be admitted here with the adults in order that by coming into contact with those parts of the building not primarily intended for their use they may acquire an understanding of the purpose and arrangement of the whole institution merely by seeming, thereby, to be a part of its life.

Adjacent to the Children's Room will be another room, fitted and equipped for story hours, dramatics, and possible exhibitions. Reading clubs may wish to meet here also. Boys and girls will make marionettes and puppets from instruction they find in books. They may even do this in a library workshop. Equipment should be provided for a small stage for dramatic performances. Children may write their own plays and produce them, making their own stage sets.

Nearby another room will be required for a consultation book service for parents, teachers and others concerned with children's reading. Expert service will be given here, offering an approach to a psychological clinic. The room should be furnished with plenty of shelving, card cabinets, vertical file cases, a desk, tables and chairs, bulletin boards and display rack. Here will be gathered collections of model grade libraries, various editions of standards, books on storytelling, plays, books for reading to preschool children, foreign books, notably illustrated books and the best of the current output. Bibliographies, lists and pamphlet material will be at hand—all under the guidance of an experienced children's librarian.

In its program of self-education the library may find use for lectures, forums, book talks, exhibits of all kinds, and music. A small auditorium will be found essential. If it is planned with a level floor, movable chairs and a small stage, probably without curtain or scen-

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ery, it will meet most demands. It should be equipped with adequate ventilation, proper lighting and sound treatment. This provision is not expensive and when well done pays good returns in satisfaction. Here must be found the latest equipment for radio reception and for showing pictures. Attention should be given to the details of decoration; however inexpensive and simple, let them be in good taste and worthy of the educational use to which the room is put.

Rooms will be needed, too, for conferences of small groups of readers and for study clubs. It may be that the library will extend its program to include actual instruction to adults in the use of books and the art of study. In such a development carefully planned rooms should be provided.

Museums and art galleries have functions entirely different from that of the library and should never be combined. Though they have much in common and may advantageously cooperate, each is important enough to work separately in its own field without being subordinated to the other. For this reason, the library will not be expected to make a permanent art collection nor to keep anything permanently on exhibit. If any exception be made to this rule, it might be that every library of importance should have a permanent exhibit of the history of the book, including fine printing. Such an exhibit has an appropriate place here.

On the other hand, temporary exhibits are absolutely essential to the library's welfare. These should be presented primarily for their educational value, even though they will always be intended to stimulate reading. Most exhibits will be borrowed or assembled for the occasion, installed and temporarily shown. Interest will be displayed chiefly in exhibits of the graphic arts—prints, photographs, illustrations, printing, binding and allied subjects. A gallery will be most advantageous if it can be included in the building plan. Without it, recessed wall cases may line the corridors and even appropriately be placed in some of the rooms. Exhibition windows and sidewalk bulletin boards may be used to acquaint passersby with

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the resources and services of the library. It is of importance that this equipment be well constructed, in accordance with the best methods produced in art galleries and museums. The library of tomorrow will not tolerate much of the makeshift equipment and home-made methods used in too many libraries today.

Music will play a more vital part in the new library, and rooms for its production should be planned. Radio reception of selected programs will be provided in "listening rooms" for individuals and for groups. Collections of records will make desirable a group of small soundproof rooms in which they may be played.

Photography also will come into an important place in the library, for photographs, like books, are records and are the literature of an art. Films will be stored and borrowed. Microphotography will so modify many phases of the library's activities that the library architect must be fully informed as to its possibilities. The showing of pictures on film, stills or movies, will fit into the library's educational scheme.

It may be necessary to provide a soundproof room in which talking books for the blind can be used by sightless readers. This will depend upon the library's resources, and the number of blind people in the community. In the past, service to this group has been difficult for both reader and library. It has been found that readers enjoy in their own homes the books sent them through the mail by special libraries for the blind, but as blind people come to have greater facilities for getting about the city alone, they may wish to listen to talking books in the library rather than read Braille at home.

Radio has endless possibilities. The library will do much broadcasting as a part of its extensive program and hookup with a broadcasting station will prove a great asset in presenting programs. It will save time which otherwise staff members must spend out of the building for rehearsals and broadcasts.

The public library of the future will go much further than the present generation has with expansion through branches. Urban areas will be completely served, although the branches will be per-

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haps less permanently built than today, in order that they may be abandoned as the community changes and reestablished more strategically elsewhere. They will always be neat, bright, convenient and inviting places. Self-education will be the basis of their service. I doubt if they will ever be community centers of amusement. They will be planned with more attention to the reading and study needs of three definite groups—adults, young people and children, and emphasis will be laid upon earnest work rather than merely upon distribution of books for home use.

I have discussed only the public library because that is the type with which I am most familiar. However, many of the principles would apply also to the college, and perhaps the university library, in spite of the demands of special consideration made upon the latter because of differing function and clientele. Just as the children are separated from the adults in the public library, so a provision for segregation of undergraduates and graduate students may be essential. Branch libraries correspond to laboratory and departmental libraries. The problem of storage of books not frequently used is greater in a college library than in some city libraries.

New methods of construction and new building materials will make possible entirely different structures. We shall build more efficiently, less expensively, equally permanently, if permanence shall still be considered altogether desirable. New metals are used to give lightness and strength to construction impossible in the use of steel beams and stone blocks. Bearing partitions are no longer necessary. Elevators make second and third stories as valuable as street floors and with the increased use of escalators and ramps stairways may disappear.

Engineers have found ways of bringing more and more sunlight far into the building. Skylights will be improved beyond belief. They will not leak in winter rains and snows, nor will it be difficult to keep them free from dust. Glare will be eliminated, the light will be so scientifically refracted that the right intensity of light in full sunshine and the desired hue will be produced and rooms will

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be transformed. Light is more vital than style. Glass is more essential than steel. Among the important contributions to present-day architecture made by the glass industry, the glass brick is destined to have a far-reaching effect. It has remarkable structural and insulating properties, and its decorative possibilities are practically limitless. Used in wall or window, glass bricks give ample, diffused light, complete privacy, keep out a large percentage of sound and reduce heat losses.

Windows will be enormously improved by an entirely new window glass about to be used which will make great changes in the amount of light admitted without glare or heat. New materials for draperies will make possible exquisite hangings inexpensively procured and economically maintained. Sunfast, mothproof, washable materials will be as available for huge windows in public buildings as they are today in well-furnished living rooms. Venetian blinds are transforming daylighting possibilities but some day Venetian blinds will be made of some such material as Kodopak instead of wood, and this beautiful translucent substance will brighten the gloomiest corners of an otherwise dark room, while delicate jade harmonies in a south window will make the light so soft and cool that readers will bask in its loveliness and never guess why they like to read there.

Electricians have created artificial lighting arrangements which almost perfectly reproduce daylight, with absolute control. Flood lighting from the ceiling, and from the tops of cases and beams, and from behind pillars, will be so perfect that it will not be theatrical but will produce a properly measured amount of light at any given point, without glare, reflections or shadows. Indirect lighting for the entire room, suffused from batteries of lamps or tubes in suspended ceilings, will give such satisfaction that those who know it will look back at our fixture-cluttered ceilings in much the same disgust as we think of the old gooseneck gas fixtures with their ashy Welsbach mantles and fluted-collar porcelain shades.

Air-conditioning systems give us fresh air, moving in proper



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currents, guaranteeing satisfactory degrees of humidity, dryness and temperature, for the comfort of the staff and readers and for the preservation of books and papers. Great advances will be made in future installations and we are assured that perfect conditions may soon be available in both large and small buildings. The great advantages which lighting and ventilating engineers have produced lead some planners to consider the elimination of all windows, which they deem useful only in admitting light and air. There is still something left in man belonging to the out of doors which makes him unhappy when he is completely shut off from contact even by sight with sky, sun, stars, and fellow beings going about their ways. There is still a value to the exterior design in windows as openings in the walls to make an intimate connection between what goes on without and what goes on within.

The engineers of sound will probably present the greatest changes. No echoes, no din, no reverberation will be allowed in places where quiet is required. In other parts of the building perfect acoustics will make it possible for librarians with their low voices to be heard distinctly even at the very back of the hall. Instead of silencing people, as the present custom seems to be, we shall let them talk naturally and normally, and we will silence the walls which allow their voices to go further than we think they should. It will be easier on the patron.

Coalbins and boilers have given space to oil heaters and more cleanliness is thus secured. But tomorrow gas and even electricity in many places will have made more space and more neatness possible. We buy steam from the public service. The day may come when the city will furnish heat and light from its own plants. The electric eye will count our patrons as they come and go, and will open doors noiselessly for the convenience of those in a hurry. Everyone will read files of newspapers and magazines, and possibly many books, from rolls of film. The library distributing automobile will drive into the Extension Department workrooms and there load, directly from the shelves, books for the stations, hospitals,

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schools, and even for the book wagons which will cover distant parts of the city and county. In regional libraries the shipping of books to other institutions will require special planning.

Encouragement is to be found in the fact that there will be available, more and more all over the country, architects skilled especially in planning library buildings. They will specialize, and they will have gained more experience as they build more libraries scientifically. We do not maintain that these buildings are basically different from other structures, but we do believe that there are applications of planning and construction techniques which produce particularly satisfactory libraries. With more certainty than ever the librarian will take his problem to the architect and with confidence await his solution of it.

And what is to be the librarian's contribution to the library building of the future? Everything. He will be quick to catch the significance of the trends of his work. He will choose the best of his day and project it into the days ahead. Disregarding stock patterns, he will work out one for his own setting. He will be practical in planning the essentials for real book service. To his own good taste he will add that of the architect, to the end that the building in design and furnishings may always have a stimulating message of beauty. He will demand excellence in the details of its construction. He will stamp upon it his own personality. And so will the building of tomorrow be supremely suited to meet the challenging demands which the future will put upon it.

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# *The Trustee of the Future*

BY WILLIAM E. MARCUS

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PROGRESS in all human effort is the result of the leadership of those who have the courage, the vision and the energy to lead and to point the way. Leaders are never satisfied with results which do not represent a reasonable approach to desirable attainable objectives. They never forget that the present is tomorrow's past, that whatever heritage remains for future generations is the product of today's activities, and that real progress can be obtained only by applying sound principles, unfailing energy and intelligent effort to predetermined worth-while goals.

The present generation in America has been reared with a wholesome respect for the institutions and precepts which have produced one of the most highly developed civilizations in the world, the true measure of which has been the steady increase in the physical comfort and opportunity of the average man and woman. The advances have become a vital part of our lives and are the background of our ambitions and our aspirations.

Among the benefits which are regarded as universal prerogatives are those of education, adult as well as juvenile, and equal opportunity, regardless of race, creed or sex.

The education we speak of as adult, which our generation has come to regard as a birthright, is access to free public libraries,

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although, unfortunately, there are still 45,000,000 people in the United States who are unable to claim this birthright because no library services are within reach. Most learning, which for the vast majority of the people of America takes place after the school age, is concerned in some way with the books and services of public libraries. Since the public libraries of America are an integral part of the educational system of our country, a correspondingly large responsibility rests upon the trustees who direct the affairs of these libraries.

It should be indeed a sobering influence for trustees of libraries all over the country to realize the responsibility they have assumed. Library trusteeship is an honor not to be accepted lightly, and should never be undertaken except with a determination to make the library a vital part of the recreational and educational system of the community. For this reason there is a grave duty resting upon the appointive officer to be certain that an appointee is the best available citizen to supplement the talents which already exist on the Board of Trustees. Political appointment of a library trustee should be unthinkable.

Apparently more public libraries are handicapped by unqualified trustees than by ineffective librarians. A study of the most successful libraries in America reveals the fact that their leadership is the result of forward-looking, alert, intelligent trustees, associated with a librarian competent to administer the internal affairs of the library. However, as the trustees direct the policies and are entirely responsible for obtaining funds to meet the costs of operation, surely no ordinary citizen is qualified to direct a business affecting so vitally the lives of so many citizens of all ages.

No modern business can hope to compete successfully whose management is not aware of the new techniques and changing policies of the leaders in the field. This means frequent contact with other executives, visits to other plants and regions where new methods have been adopted, a constant reading of trade journals and all printed material which bears upon the business. Competent

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trustees will regard it as their absolute duty to meet often with other trustees, to visit numerous other libraries during the course of each year, and to read everything available which may tend to increase their knowledge of library management. It will be taken as a matter of routine that the expenses of at least one trustee to library conferences, both state and national, will be paid, as trustees do not always have financial resources to meet these expenses.

Library trustees of tomorrow will be definitely confronted with the responsibility of obtaining larger appropriations for libraries, if our whole system of adult education is to develop and meet the needs of our people. A higher scale of remuneration to librarians is indicated, larger book purchases, a sound system of meeting the costs of retirement, and a method of financing new buildings and capital expenditures. Failure to meet these obligations, especially reasonable compensation for all grades of librarianship, may be expected to lead to some form of group action or organizing among library personnel. We are living, today, in a world of new concepts in relationships of employees and employed, and it behooves the directors of the destinies of libraries to plan wisely and promptly how their obligations to librarians can be met with justness and fairness.

Many of the problems of libraries revolve around the need for a definite program, which is another term for "planning." Wise planning requires leadership, and leadership requires competent, broad-minded envisioning individuals (trustees) who recognize the importance of planning. The only hope of carrying out a program is to understand its objectives and implications, and to recognize clearly the obstacles and limitations which retard approach to fulfillment. Most human effort and ambition are directed and activated by the basic idea of reaching goals. Successful businesses inject into the conduct of their activities sales quotas and objectives.

When programs and planning are under consideration for libraries, trustees and librarians have found it essential to start with a firm foundation, from which to move forward and measure prog-

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ress. This fixed immovable base is an outside survey which gives a complete picture of strengths and weaknesses, and establishes how far one has traveled toward desirable objectives. It is a looking glass and at the same time a measuring rod. Successful trustees of the future will insist upon operating with the indispensable help of a survey and a definite program. They will recognize that progress is the result of trial and error, will be eager to experiment with new ideas, and will be determined to have their library excel. If trustees all over the country would only realize that larger library budgets are their responsibility and not that of librarians, and if they would use sound practical sales methods, there would be many more libraries rendering adequate service and justifying larger appropriations.

The technique of "selling the library" to the community will involve the expenditure annually of a regular budget to be used to foster public relations and create general familiarity with the services available at the library. The taxpayer must be sympathetic with the needs of the library and its aspirations, and will be taught that annual increases in the budget are necessary if the library is adequately to meet the needs of the people. The right kind of publicity (which some day will be called "public relations," instead) will go a long way in causing local appropriating bodies readily to grant a liberal budget to the library. There will be in all probability a national library "public relations bureau" which will collect and disseminate, wherever requested, the best examples of successful public relations material. Such material will differ from the kind used in the past, and will stress, in addition to the services available, the attitude of the library towards its patrons. It will not attempt to impress with emphasis on quantity but by accenting the quality of services. These are indeed challenges for trustees.

There will be found new methods of regional cooperation—ways of pooling certain resources to give broader distribution in areas lacking in library facilities. Municipal, county and state boundaries will cease to have importance, and whole regions of logical geo-

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graphical proximity will be serviced through newly devised systems of pooling and cooperation. These new methods will be developed by trustees who have vision and determination to find ways and means of parting from past precedents and who will dare to go forward fearlessly and with confidence that such objectives can and will be attained.

The days to come will require forward looking trustees whose wagons will be hitched to new stars and who will not be content with inadequate budgets and the averages of mediocrity. Their credo will be found in the ageless sentiment expressed by Goethe, who recognized so vividly the difficulties of "beginning":

*"Spend this day loitering, 'twill be the same story  
Tomorrow, and the next more dilatory.  
True, indecision brings its own delays  
And days are lost lamenting over days.  
If you are in earnest about a thing, begin it,  
Beginning has genius, power, magic in it.  
Begin it and the mind grows heated,  
Begin it and the work will be completed."*

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## *The Library's Responsibility to the Child*

BY LILLIAN H. SMITH

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"THERE are few things more wonderful to me," wrote John Ruskin, "than that old people never tell young ones how precious their youth is." Over half a century has passed since Ruskin recorded his sense of the failure of an older generation to bear witness to the preciousness of youth. Meanwhile the intervening years have seen such changes that a mere list of the opportunities provided by later generations for young people today would fill with wonder the mind of Ruskin and his contemporaries.

Probably the greatest development has been in the field of education where the ideal of equal opportunity for all has been the achievement of the widespread public school system. Preoccupied with the accomplishment of their aim, it is possible that educationists were unaware of the corresponding pouring out of printed matter from the press which kept pace with the growth of a new reading public and which catered to their supposed interests and tastes. Ramsay MacDonald once said that British schools "are sending out millions of people whose capacity to read makes them the prey of the most worthless and mentally devastating printed matter." At the same time Stanley Baldwin, speaking before the English



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Association, recalled his early youth: "I can look back through the ages to a small boy. I can see him far away in Worcestershire reading all day in that most comfortable attitude, lying on his stomach on the hearthrug in front of the fire. . . . When I look back on those far-distant years I think I can recognize my own good fortune which may have been shared by many here. I was left to find my own provender in the library."

To provide an equivalent of a library at home for less fortunate children, at least in the opportunity to "find their own provender," the public library children's rooms gradually established themselves as an integral part of the public library, and their fundamental importance in the general scheme was fully recognized.

It is idle to suggest that children's reading began with the children's library idea. Children were reading *Alice in Wonderland* and *Water babies*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Arabian nights* long before there were children's rooms in public libraries, and the children to whom books are available will continue to read them whether public libraries exist or not. The important point to remember is that children's reading, unlike that of adults, is conditioned by what is at hand. Whether they find books, as did young Stanley Baldwin, in the well-chosen libraries of their fathers, or whether they become "the prey of the most worthless and mentally devastating printed matter" for lack of such a library, one thing is sure, and that is that children will read something. "Take what you will, quoth God, and pay for it." And they do pay for it, these children who through no fault of their own take what is cheap and shoddy because it is at hand, and so go maimed all their lives. Here, I think, is the first responsibility of the public library to the child, the responsibility for the books that are made available to him; and the second is like unto it in importance since it is the channel through which the books reach the children. That channel is a person, concerning whom I shall have more to say later on.

Since the days of John Newbery the field of children's books has widened to an extent that would astonish that enterprising dis-

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penser of "pretty little pocket books." In those days the choice was simple. Newbery offered his little collection and besides that there was no other "milk for babes." The children turned then to the strong meat of English literature, thus profiting by the limitation of the field. Today there is no chance that a child, even if he remain a child forever, could exhaust the thousands of "juveniles" printed for consumption and which are increasing annually with the speed and volume of a snowball rolling downhill. Never before have there been offered to children so many original and beautiful books, and on the other hand never so many that are worthless and tawdry. If it does not matter what children read, if the Patty and Betty, the Tom and Dick of the moment, at home, at school, and abroad, can give as much abiding joy and richness of experience as *Little boy lost* and Kipling's *Jungle book*, there is no problem of selection, for then the distinction of the one has no advantage over the lack of it in the other. "We only perceive that to which we are attuned," said Conrad Aiken, and if some children are attuned to the mediocre it may be it is by reason of the failure of the grownups, on whom they are dependent, to provide bread in place of stones, even though they may be "stepping stones."

There is plenty of interest today in children's reading. We have books and articles, surveys and lists pointing out what children read, but mainly from the adult point of view. We are in danger, I think, of overlooking the importance of the child's opinion of the books he reads, and perhaps too of forgetting the lovely taste of an unspoiled child. A children's librarian once told of seeking favor in the eyes of a four-year-old by offering to tell him a story as he lay in his crib at bedtime. "George," she said, "do you know the story of the Little Red Hen?" "Yes-s-s," he said, politely but without enthusiasm, then added with an eager change, "do you know 'Unto the hills—mine eyes?' Daddy says that to me, 'the Lord my shepherd—not want.' Say that." "I was ashamed," said the children's librarian, "me, with my Little Red Hen!" Already, though he was only four, the sonorous rhythm of the intoned psalms had beaten

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its way into his consciousness. What a comment on the generally accepted idea of an appropriate bedtime story!

The only valid way in which we can test our conclusions concerning children's reading, however confident and serene, is to enter a child's mental world through gaining his confidence by some method best discovered by ourselves. If we can do this, and if we record the answers to our questions when we ask children what they think of the books they read, and if we can find out what is uppermost in their minds, what enriching or vitiating influence is at work on their imaginings as a result of the reading of a book, we shall have a sounder basis for our pronouncements regarding children's books. And we shall also have the nucleus for a body of evidence on what children like and dislike in their books, and know what happens to a book over a period of years that confirms or denies its value in children's reading. I do not believe that such records taken down in the children's room are very generally preserved but where they are they have dispelled a certain vagueness of generalization and have informed the children's librarian's experience of the reading of boys and girls.

I have never found any better way to choose books for a children's library than by finding out from the children themselves what they like. It is impossible, I think, for the grownup to know this who is not in the confidence of the child who reads. Failing his confidence, the grownup falls back upon her own standards and personal preference or prejudice. In such a case one can only quote Quiller-Couch, who says, "If we limit the children of the next generation to what we admire ourselves we pauperize their minds," or, one can offer the argument that the new psychology of childhood has given it a place of its own and has banished forever the old-fashioned psychology that considered boys and girls as immature or miniature men and women. The needs and requirements of the two "publics" with which the library deals, the child and the adult, are as separate, distinct and different in their nature as if we held parley with two races in different worlds. Perhaps our failure as

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adults to realize this need for knowing the requirements of the race we call children is responsible for the oblivion into which some of the books that have won the Newbery medal have fallen.

I know of no better example of the discrepancy between the world of the child and the adult than an incident that occurred in a children's room placed in what would at once proclaim itself to a grownup as a converted cellar, which as a matter of *fact* it is. But the *truth*, to a child, is that it is Aladdin's cave. He rubs his lamp three times and he has what he will from the universe—romance, courage, beauty, a new heaven and a new earth. Children perceive this. Witness the ten-year-old boy who sat down with an opulent sigh in this same basement room and, crossing one knee judicially over the other, leaned back and surveyed the rows of books before him. "Jim," he said to a friend, "how would you like to live in a mansion like this all the time? Want to read? All you have to do is to reach up and take a book off the wall!" Sighing, the friend agreed that it was magnificence. Apparently the vista opened up deprived them of speech, for they continued a long time, for boys, to gaze on the shelves in silence.

*"Before me shone a glorious world—  
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled  
To music, suddenly. . . ."*

Children have by nature been always the same. Stevenson, writing to his friend Henley about his book, *Treasure island*, said, "If this don't fetch the kids they have gone rotten since my day." They have not "gone rotten" these many years, if the steady sale of *Treasure island* is any indication. Today they still love brightness and beauty, high adventure and all that is alive, just as they did when *Treasure island* was new, and they still interpret the impressions and experiences which they meet, in their own way, and make from them their own world of idea and thought. There is no limit to a child's imaginative grasp, and it is well to remember this in these days of vocabulary tests and reading skills, and other

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"verbal wily-beguilies" at which I would like, with the seventeenth century poet, "to flap my ears."

No explanation or definition is necessary to tell a child the meaning of a Psammead. Aegis-bearing Zeus may not convey to a boy or girl the picture that the pedant might wish to have it convey, but the child's enjoyment of Odysseus is none the less keen, and is gained at the time when the spirit of the storytelling poet is most akin to the heart of a child.

I suppose the ruling desire of every librarian, adult or children's, is to have the library with all it stands for occupy as large a place in the lives of its patrons as possible. For this reason I have grown to dread the word "standardization" as I do "regimentation." "I believe in individual people, I see salvation in individual personalities scattered here and there," says Chekhov. The children's room is about the only place where a child comes as an individual, with individual tastes and interests. Is it not the library's responsibility to provide the books that will give his imagination, intelligence, curiosity and experience satisfactory material to grow on, and that will provide an escape from the standardization which lessens his opportunity to develop his own ideas or to trust his own imaginings?

One day, as I was coming out of the library, a tall youth with college texts under his arm stopped me, saying I had probably forgotten him. It was only when he gave me his name that I remembered a little boy who used to bring me his inventions to admire, and finally capped them with a play in three acts. To my embarrassment he had watched me as I read it, and I was so confounded by the sordidness and melodrama—a rehash of the worst type of motion picture, told by a child—that the only thing I could find to say as I laid it down was, "Why, Frank, you have killed them all!" That was Frank at eleven. Now, in his third college year, he wishes he had some way of letting the librarians know what they meant to him and to others like him. "I often wonder if librarians have any idea how much their sympathy with a boy's interests means to him, especially if he meets with none at home.

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I wish I could make them understand what it is they are doing for the children who go to the library." It was significant, I thought, that it was the librarians he spoke of, not the books.

The choice of a children's librarian is in the last analysis the measure of the success of the library's children's room, a success that must depend on the effectiveness of the channel by means of which children and books are brought into the right relationship. There was a time when libraries, thinking that children's books were easy to work with, and that children were immature and uncritical, considered the youngest and most immature member of the staff the most suitable person to be given charge of this work. The pendulum has now swung in the other direction to such an extent that it is as well to draw attention to the fact that the exceptional person, for whom every library is looking, is perhaps discouraged by the paper qualifications of the academically ambitious. It is well also to remember that the ability to pass examinations is no indication of ability to change books from dead things on the shelf into living breathing realities. When I peruse the certificates, diplomas and mounting degrees which I am asked to accept as predicated all needful qualities for children's work, I am reminded of Charles Lamb's making a little scale of titles of honor, with himself the recipient: 1, Mr. C. Lamb; 2, C. Lamb, Esq., etc. "Sometimes," he says, "in my dreams I imagine myself still advancing, as, 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent; higher than which is nothing upon earth."

I am not suggesting that knowledge is not a professional asset, but so far neither university nor library school degree holders, observed over a period of years, give evidence of any great stress laid in these institutions on a knowledge of books other than texts, and of their vital relation to human nature.

The children's librarian today has a much more complicated job than she had 20 years ago. The possibilities of her work are only equaled by the care that must be taken to preserve its integrity of purpose in the face of the demands made upon it from outside. As

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library work with children is now developing, books connect themselves with almost every other form of art or knowledge or social activity. Many children's librarians can hardly escape the claims that social and economic problems, at present to the fore, make on their sympathy and interest. Their minds are exercised with the problem of how to help socially, through the library and the advantage it offers, children who have, perhaps, very few other advantages.

From the school comes the most insistent demand on the children's librarian and her resources, strongest of all because of the pressure of sheer numbers behind it. The public library children's room has become a recognized element in the education of boys and girls today, and parents, teachers and other adults interested in the training of children recognize and respect the work of the children's librarian.

Questions of policy, of organization and of cooperation beset the children's librarian on every hand. The one thing in danger of being forgotten is—the book. Just as paint is the medium of the artist, and combinations of sounds that of the musician, so books are the medium of the librarian and not just her stock in trade. It used to be said by children's librarians that their profession had this advantage, that the smallness of the field of children's literature made it possible for them to know all the books in the collection. I think this advantage no longer holds. To select from the publishers' output of juveniles for one year means reading hundreds of books and, in some cases, the rereading of older books for comparison. How much time is left for rereading and re-evaluating the books now on our shelves? Can a children's librarian be said to know her collection when her knowledge of the individual books involves an act of memory, reaching back through years?

"What a man works at, it is his duty to study," and when I think of the future I visualize children's librarians returning as students year by year to learn more and more of what it is to their advantage to know, from other children's librarians who have made one spe-

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cialized field of children's books their own, whether it is the critical evaluation of modern writing for children or whether it is the ancient sources that provide the material for new versions of epic hero tales.

In a profession whose chief handicaps, particularly in smaller communities, is often the sense of isolation felt by a children's librarian who has little opportunity to check her ideas and knowledge with others in the same field, such an opportunity to enlarge and extend her personal equipment and prepare her to meet adequately the increasing demands of the work, will go a long way toward preventing the blight of superficiality from invading our field. The keynote of the whole work of the children's librarian is opportunity. Opportunity if a children's librarian can keep her spirit clear and alive, to become a sort of channel through which some hint of the glory of the universe can get through to the children by means of the contagion of her own unfeigned enthusiasm for books.



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## *School Library Service: 1970*

BY MILDRED L. BATCHELDER

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FROM the school library windows, children could be seen pouring out of the busses and running to the school entrance. Earlier arrivals had already put away their wraps, were returning books to the library and borrowing others for the morning's work. Quite as busy as the three librarians were the six members of the student staff who had hurried in for the few minutes before school to perform their several duties. In addition to the children searching for books for personal needs, a 10th-grade teacher, a 7th-grade boy, and a girl from the primary grades were each assembling books to take to their classrooms. The boy left his pile to ask about motion-picture films showing a New Orleans Mardi Gras. While no such film was at hand, the librarian found through her lists of films available in the district that the regional library had one. It would be sent to the school the following day.

The small girl who had been choosing poetry books was also looking for transcriptions of A. A. Milne and Robert Louis Stevenson, reading their own poems. Milne records were supplied but, to the girl's surprise, Stevenson had lived before the day of radio recording.

When the teacher had completed her selection, a student staff

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member saw that the books were charged and sent to her room. As the teacher left, she invited the librarian to join her in talking with her class about personal ownership of books. An alert student assistant who happened to have responsibility for library exhibits overheard the request and suggested that 3 or 4 members of the class each choose about 15 books which he would like to own. The books would be displayed, and possibly lists of them with the reasons for their choice could be made in the print shop.

On this spring morning in 1970, one observer watched the scene with intense interest, at the same time that she took part in it. Eight months before, she had started her year's internship in the library of this consolidated school. She must soon decide what kind of school library work had most appeal for her; which position of the three open to her she might best fill. Thoughts of next fall pushed forward on this particular morning, when the air seemed alive with beginnings, and the world waiting for enthusiastic and vigorous workers in any field. Today she would have another opportunity to get her impressions in proper perspective, for she was again to go on the book truck on its twice-a-week visit to two remote elementary schools. There were three of these small schools whose children would later come to the consolidated school. Each of the three had regular and frequent visits from one of the school librarians. During the trip, the intern pictured to herself all the kinds of school library work about which she knew, and discussed them with the enthusiastic school librarian who was her companion.

In the first place, the experience in the consolidated school had been so vivid and exciting, it was doubtful whether any other kind of service could overshadow it. There the friendly library rooms were both working and reading rooms. From the time the school doors opened in the morning until they were closed at night, children of all ages came, sometimes seeking specific information but often just to read. The older children—those from 7th through 10th grades—found their books and magazines in one room, while those for the elementary grades were in a room adjoining. There were,

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of course, many occasions during the day when children from one group needed and used the other's materials.

In the classrooms, there were still more books. Whether a room were devoted to home economics, shop, music, dramatics, kindergarten, third grade, science, social studies or mathematics, it was certain to have books readily at hand. These books were not fixed collections, of course, for it was essential that they be changed constantly to fit the specific and present needs of the class. This meant that all the books in the classrooms emanated from the main school library. The children, the teachers, and the library shared the responsibility of keeping class libraries fresh and suited to the needs of the groups. The classroom bookshelves and the two or three reading chairs made for each room a popular corner, and it was unusual when absorbed readers were not to be found there.

Part of the intern's work was to help the librarian visit classes to learn of their needs for books, pamphlets, films, transcriptions, museum material, or exhibits. She remembered one visit to a mathematics class where students were studying tax support for schools and libraries, and were looking into the relative economy and efficiency of small and large school or library districts. A class committee had gone back to the library with her to look up some pamphlets and reports on their own state as a basis for their calculations. During a visit to a social studies class, the students were asking about contemporary opinions on certain "historic" events at the time when they took place. As a result, microfilm copies of newspapers of Revolutionary and Civil War days were borrowed from the regional reference library. Arrangements were made to have the school's reading machine in the classroom, so that any students who wished might examine the old newspapers.

The intern thought back to her training for work as a school librarian. Great stress had been laid on the school library's integral relation to the whole school program. Its effectiveness, she had learned, would depend on the extent to which it helped in achieving the school's educational and social purposes. In the consolidated

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school she had seen a demonstration of the library's many contributions to those aims. Through the library's resources, many books and other printed materials were made available for the experience in reading which is a necessary part of learning to read. Children found a wide variety of books to explore and through them were able to discover and extend their interests and tastes. From the library and classroom, there was constant and guided use of books which would lead many to a permanent habit of reading and to discrimination in the acceptance and appreciation of the printed word.

Somewhat amused at her own seriousness, the intern turned her attention to other activities of the school library which seemed to her to contribute to the school's objectives. The student staff was one. Student participation in services valuable to the group and familiarity with community institutions and services were definite school objectives, and the experiences of the library student staff under the librarian's guidance contributed toward both aims. Here on the truck today, for example, were two ninth-grade staff members going out to help on the book truck and in the two small schools that would be visited. On any trip there would usually be one or two students. Back in the library, the members were not only able and responsible assistants in matters of routine, but the group endeavored to interpret the library's purposes and services to the school community and to bring back to its staff meetings needs or criticisms which came from the other students.

A second activity went outside the school to the entire community. The school library not only tried to help students to learn how to use libraries, but to know the citizen's responsibility for good library service and the avenues through which it can be obtained. The intern reflected on last week's meeting at which the student staff entertained the regional library board and discussed community library questions. She remembered the board's appreciation of the questions and interest of the young people, and its return invitation. She thought of the plans made for a discussion

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on young people's reading at the next parents' meeting. In the panel of young people and parents gathered to consider the subject, what would be said about the influence of library and teacher reading guidance on reading habits and tastes, what would be indicated as the problems, as well as the most significant values of the reading which boys and girls were now doing? From their experience with libraries available to them throughout their school careers, the parents would perhaps discuss the effect on their adult reading of their own school library reading experiences. However discussion turned, it would surely be provocative, and teachers and librarians would join the parents in the audience in the general discussion to follow.

The regional library was the parent library for both the consolidated school library and the community branch in the village. Because buying, preparing, cataloging and rebinding books could be more economically handled in a central office than through individual small school and public libraries, all schools in the area through cooperative arrangements had centralized these activities in the regional library. School librarians, however, like other faculty members, were on the school salary list. Where school buildings were also used as community centers, the regional library branch was housed there, adjacent to the school library and sharing many of its facilities. With additional staff and books, it served the community in the afternoons and evenings during vacations, as well as in the school year.

From her correspondence with classmates, as well as from her training, the intern realized that the development of school library service to children in rural areas had been tremendously stimulated—had really come into general existence—with the inauguration and increase of federal and state aid for libraries and for education. Such aid was taken for granted, and it was difficult to think there was a time not many years back when the federal and state governments did not recognize the responsibility to provide library service as an essential means toward self-education and toward the good use of leisure.

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It was also as a direct result of federal and state aid, she had read, that county supervisors of school library service were added to the staffs of so many county and regional libraries, and to the offices of county superintendents of schools. Even though consolidation of schools had proceeded apace, there were still numbers of schools too small for a separate library and librarian. To them, itinerant or supervising school librarians made frequent visits. In this state, as in others, county and local school librarians had received stimulation and leadership from state school library supervisors.

Reviewing this rural situation, the intern realized that, in reality, the services given by school libraries were similar in every school. Differences lay in the adaptation of each individual library to the specific purposes and the needs of the school it served. The variation in type of administration controlling the school and its library was the machinery through which individual adaptation was worked out. Although the services were the same in rural and urban schools, the method of accomplishment varied in accordance with the school administrative pattern and the type of school library organization which fitted into that pattern.

She was suddenly aware that she had been silent a long time and that the librarian at her side could help her in the decision which that morning seemed so imminent and so imperative. A few questions brought them to a discussion of city schools and their library systems, some of which she had visited. In the city, each elementary and junior and senior high school had its library rooms. Sometimes two very small elementary schools shared one librarian. The supervisor in charge of the central department of school libraries was responsible for the frequent ordering of books selected by the schools, each librarian having coordinated all requests from her school. Preparation, classifying, cataloging and rebinding were also handled in the central department, and books delivered to schools when ready. More significant than the administrative economies of the central department were the guidance and the stimulation of the school library supervisor. Through him, library implications

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of program and curriculum changes were studied and discussed, library needs interpreted to administrators and parents, and effective ways of providing library service shared through library staff cooperative study.

The various social services within the community were carefully coordinated through interlocking boards and councils. Public schools and public libraries, both institutions intimately concerned with education at every level, had worked out their programs cooperatively that they might supplement each other and provide young people and adults with satisfactory and efficient book services and reading guidance. Because local groups determined the details, the method varied among communities. Central book purchasing and preparation was common. Public libraries usually gave special emphasis to books and reading advice for preschool-age children, for parent education, for young people when they left school, and to all children when school was not in session. Most public libraries seemed to have very active school reference departments which looked up unusual information not available in school libraries and sent it out on the daily school deliveries with interlibrary loans which had been requested. The old practice of classroom deposits had long since disappeared.

The librarian asked the intern if she had visited any of the large city secondary schools for 11th through 14th grades. She described one located in a seven-story building with a library room on each floor. The interesting feature was the arrangement of all the libraries in one tier, with special elevator service and book conveyors. The main school library, located on the second floor near the school office, was larger than the others and, like many school libraries, had a stack room adjoining it. With the increased quantity of books necessary to supply classroom libraries, book rooms had become as much a part of a school library suite as conference and listening rooms, browsing room, or workroom. The branch libraries on the other floors emphasized in their book collections the subjects in which classes meeting on that floor were interested.

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As they talked, the question of which kind of library work the intern might choose became more engrossing, although more complex. Even so, the librarian mentioned one further interesting type of school library—that in the demonstration school of a teacher training institution. Almost without exception, these libraries were well equipped and well staffed. Usually they insisted on experience beyond internship before considering applicants for positions. In them, librarians working with outstanding teachers experimented to find effective ways of guiding reading and of helping children in their search for information. Through observation and use of these libraries, young people preparing to teach and those preparing for school librarianship gained an understanding of children's use of books, and were ready to effectively provide and use school library service in the schools where they would find positions. The growth of the demonstration school libraries had been stimulated some 30 years before by a study which more than justified its cost and whose recommendations became the basis for state and federal subsidies for the training of teachers.

Finally, the school at which the book truck was to make its first stop came in sight. As they rode up the last hill, the intern put into words an impression which was gradually becoming clear to her. Would it matter so much, after all, which type of school library work she chose? Her decision might be guided by certain geographical preferences and by a personal aptitude for working with certain age groups. Basically, all school libraries worked to achieve the same purposes: to help young people to an understanding and efficiency in the use of books and other library materials, and to pleasure and appreciation of values in reading for its own sake.

The way in which those purposes could be gained might be different in one place or another, but very important was the recognition that any particular administrative pattern was merely a means to an end, not an end in itself. To be sensitive and responsive to the present and potential book experience and book needs of the



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individuals in a school would require inspired imagination and adaptability, in addition to all her training and background.

If this was school library service in 1970, what would it be in 10—20—or more years? It was difficult to prophesy, but certainly school librarianship, this field of work which she had chosen, promised to have a stimulating and exciting future.

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## *College and University Libraries*

BY HENRY M. WRISTON

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CERTAINLY the safest and probably the most significant comment that could be made about the college and university libraries of tomorrow is that they will reflect the nature of the institutions themselves. They cannot rise much higher than the source of their energy. Libraries may, of course, initiate policies and provide services which will assist colleges and universities in finding their proper directions, but in the long run they cannot perform effective services at variance with the programs of the institutions.

When the American college was established, and for 200 years thereafter, the curriculum was simple and the library was small. The students read relatively few books, but they read them with an intensity and with a thoroughgoing analysis which today is rare indeed. When the curricula of universities became infinitely diversified, when the numbers of students mounted up into the thousands, and when the purposes of the institutions became diffuse, libraries were compelled to gather material upon an enormous range of subjects. Many of the newer fields of study had no adequate literature and the mushroom writings inevitably were lacking in permanence. There were no standards such as had existed in the older and more stable subjects of study. Therefore, it was necessary to incorporate much material which was not very good, while

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some that was bad found its way into the libraries. Many of the subjects became so specialized and their growth was so rapid that departments and various divisions of the university set up their own collecting agencies. In consequence, there frequently ceased to be such an institution as a university library. Instead, there were many libraries, often quite loosely coordinated, as was the university itself.

The era, some aspects of which have just been described, was by no means wholly bad. Looking back, it resembles the period of exploration of the continent of North America. A good deal of the motion now appears to have been aimless, but the explorers did not have maps and their wanderings provided the basis for accurate surveys which could follow only after the principal characteristics of the terrain had been covered. If the American university and its library have likewise appeared to explore new subjects without much design or pattern and without coherent purpose, it must be remembered that the field of scholarship has expanded enormously during the last century, while the whole definition and technique of professional preparation have also been altered.

The time has now come for a redefinition of the several responsibilities of colleges and universities. The universities grew out of liberal arts colleges, but it can no longer be said that the liberal college is at the center of the university. There are all kinds of undergraduate institutions carrying the name of college, and that number will be diversified still further as time goes on unless there is an unforeseen revolution in the offing. It is to be hoped, however, that institutions will make their choices somewhat more clearly and, it must be said, somewhat more honestly. When made, those choices should be reflected in the libraries. A collection of books in a teachers college ought not to be the same as the assortment of volumes in a college of liberal arts, and an undergraduate school of business administration should not be expected to make the same selection as an engineering college.

If this day of clear diversification ever dawns, libraries will no

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longer be judged by the number of volumes they contain, a number which can be surreptitiously padded by counting uncataloged and virtually inaccessible government documents. Nor will much importance be given to the gross number of periodicals, including company house organs contributed by way of advertising, which often swell the count of periodicals without adding to the real service of the libraries. It is to be hoped that the era of measuring institutions of higher education by their size is drawing to a close, and that henceforth the quality of their work, the integrity with which they specify and then pursue their aims, will play a larger part. When this time comes, certainly judgments regarding their libraries will no longer be based upon the number of volumes that they contain, but upon the uses for which they are found adequate and to which they are put.

Considering the enormous rapidity of their growth and the demands which have been made upon them, it is remarkable how libraries have already improved in quality. The professional spirit among librarians preceded professional training, but professional training has also made great strides. Nevertheless, the rapid growth of libraries in size and their improvement in quality have not been accompanied by as large an increase in student reading, either in amount or in quality, as might reasonably be expected.

It is one of the tragic paradoxes that the larger a library is and, in a sense, the better it is, the more difficult it is for students to use it, and particularly for those who need it most. The larger and better the library, the more precise must the student be in calling for a book of the existence of which he may not know, the longer he must wait to get it, and the less chance he has to see it on the shelf, to see other books in the same classification, and to handle books freely. Moreover, while it is true that the quality of libraries has improved, it is equally true that the books which would have the deepest and most enriching significance to students are more and more buried in the mass.

Furthermore, the problem of theft in the big libraries, especially

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those located in large cities and with scattered student bodies, is such that access to the books is almost always severely restricted. One prominent librarian, when asked what he would advise, said he would allow access to the stacks and then search everyone to the skin. He advanced that rather as an ideal than as a practical suggestion! After bitter experience with losses, the question of custody is apt to receive more active and sympathetic consideration than the matter of circulation. In fact, since access to books has become so complicated in large university libraries, it is fair to say that undergraduate students actually have more direct and broader contact with books in some of the best smaller liberal arts colleges, whose libraries do not compare in size.

Administrative problems, too, have become more and more serious as libraries have grown in size. Large-scale production brings economies to industry, but large-scale collecting does not have like benefits. Few things are more mysterious to a layman than the vital process of cataloging. As the library grows, those mysteries become, not simpler, but ever more esoteric, so that the cost of cataloging inevitably advances. In one great library the cost of refusing a book—that is, checking to see whether the library possesses a copy of as good an edition in as good condition, whether it needs or can use duplicates—runs to a sum of money often equal to or greater than the cost of the book itself.

Many college libraries and nearly all university libraries contain special collections. At their best these are of great value, at their worst they are practically useless; but in any event they greatly complicate the problem. If a special collection is spotty, it is of little value. If it is complete, the passion for completeness tends to become almost a mania which dominates the administration. Questions as to quality are brushed aside on the ground that it is necessary to have everything in the field. Gathering, cataloging, and storing sometimes so completely exhaust the resources that utilization of the collection falls into second place. It is reminiscent of the government's policy of paying a high premium to miners to mine

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gold, buying it at a high price, and then sterilizing it and burying it somewhere else.

So complicated has the structure of the large library become that it has seemed more convenient to split it up into departmental libraries so that the books could be close to those who use them and more readily available. This is, however, a specious simplification, for it tends to isolate the books from a wider range of use and the students in the departments from a wider range of reading. Furthermore, it requires that the catalog shall be duplicated in several places if persons are to ascertain conveniently whether a book is available. These duplicate and interdepartmental catalogs inevitably advance the cost. The expense of the necessary messenger service is also greater than that involved when the books are all in one place.

In order that a reasonable number of books among the enormous mass might be made easily available to students, the system of having certain books put "on reserve" was adopted. This practice, also, has its serious defects. In the first place, the reserved books are almost invariably connected with a course. The significance of the book as a whole is lost; it becomes a slave to one or two courses. Assignments to such books are usually for a few pages or a few chapters; only those parts peculiarly necessary for the immediate matter in hand are stipulated. Moreover, the existence of a selected group of books put upon special reserve singles them out as the "important" books, and puts others at a discount in the eyes of students. Their firsthand knowledge of the resources of the library, and how to use them, is limited. Using the reserved books, they face no problems of choice or selection, of search and sampling. Incentives to initiative in the utilization of books are impaired or destroyed. The reason often given for having a reserve shelf is that more students can use the books. That is not necessarily the result; actual study has shown that many books circulate not only more freely but also more frequently when made available for home use. Numerous devices looking toward simplicity and the

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more ready availability of books have made them actually less available and have created more problems than they have solved.

Many of the problems which librarians face are symptoms of a serious disease at present attacking American higher education. The malady involves the disintegration of institutions into departments until universities, and even colleges, become merely the sum of their parts. It seems obvious that the next 10 years must see the reversal of that tendency, because an institution should be a corporate entity which, properly conceived, is much more than the sum of its parts. The library, therefore, is not merely a separate administrative division with its own budget, its own staff, its own rules, its own procedures, and its own ideals. It must, of course, be all those things, but it must be infinitely more—an instrument of instruction, rather than an obstacle to instruction.

Furthermore, all too often, the librarian is looked upon as an administrative officer. Although he has many administrative functions, he is, in the most genuine sense, an officer of instruction. He should have, therefore, the scholarly interests and tastes which are expected of other members of the faculty and he should enjoy the faculty status of a full professor. That ranking involves the penalty of participation in all committee work, but it also confers the privilege of joining in discussions relating to academic policy. The least important qualification of the librarian is his training. While he obviously should not be a stranger to library procedures, the insistence in every case that he have formal graduate library courses might deprive some institution of the services of a person of rare gifts. The individual with ideas and appreciation of problems, with resourcefulness and energy, can learn many of the technical things which were omitted in his training as he administers the library, but all the courses in the world will not supply imagination or tact, industry or scholarly feeling.

The present situation of the library, it must be emphasized, is only one evidence of the tendency to disintegration which has marked the American college. The junior college movement is

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another. It cannot be said with any plausibility that this movement has centered its activities in strong libraries or that it represents a fundamental belief in the power of good reading. As a gesture of weariness, some educators have even suggested that the bachelor's degree should be conferred at the end of the second junior college year, on the ground that the degree has ceased to have any genuine significance and that people like degrees. They look forward to the master's degree as the real undergraduate degree, while many graduate schools feel that the master's degree has become merely a foundation for graduate work and does not represent anything substantial in its own name and in its own right.

Several other evidences of institutional disintegration could be cited. Enough has been said to indicate that the effective integration of the library with the central task of the college is something which does not stand by itself. The acuteness of the library's problems is only symptomatic. The real task is the complete integration of the total structure. Then, and only then, can the library play its proper part.

It is fair to say that even now the libraries are better and more effective than the curricula of many institutions of higher education. Taking them in the large, it is certainly safe to say that the libraries are better than the quality of the students to whom they are called upon to minister. Indeed, the libraries, though I say it with regret, are often better than the faculties. One might go a step further and say that the libraries are even better than their own administrations. The accretion of the years has brought them richness which we have not succeeded in using effectively.

For the college library, the first and central reform is to clear away the obstacles which prevent access by better students to greater books. This means, so far as undergraduates are concerned, a yet more intelligent and more discriminating selection of books, matched by a like selection of students. The selection of students has not been going forward nearly so effectively as the selection of books. Human beings can be handled less objectively, they can be



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analyzed less effectively, and they can scarcely be cataloged at all. Unhappily, moreover, the advances which might have been made have been retarded by false and sentimental views of democracy and by misinterpretation of the quality of opportunity. The schools and colleges have been expected to do things for which they are not adapted.

There is a word in currency today which I never hear without acute pain. Men speak of the responsibility of schools for the "custody" of American youth, and the schools have been loaded with all the noneducational implications of that word. Colleges and universities have had sent to their doors young people without intellectual interest or intellectual capacity, with neither the taste nor the aptitude for vigorous intellectual work. This is indeed making educational institutions places of "custody." There are other and more fruitful methods of employment of those with no taste or aptitude for college. It would be vastly better for many if it could be said of them as once it was of artisans of old: "All these put their trust in their hands; and each becometh wise in his own work. Without these shall not a city be inhabited, and men shall not sojourn nor walk up and down therein. . . . They will maintain the fabric of the world; and in the handywork of their craft is their prayer." It is an abuse of people who cannot read books and who cannot find in books the instruments for the enlargement of life to insist that they attend institutions of higher learning solely because society is supposed to have an obligation to take care of them. There may be such an obligation, but it is not one which the college and university library can discharge.

Education proceeds with a student, a book, and a mediator, who stimulates the student to read, who guides him in his reading, and who shares with him in the effort to interpret and assimilate what he has read. The better the student, the better the book, the better the mediator, the better the education. It is conceivable that the mediator might be omitted, for education can proceed with a good student and a good book. The student need not be a genius,

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for a fairly good mind with a great book can still find wisdom. But if the book be poor, the mediator has nothing with which to mediate and the student has nothing with which to study.

It cannot be contended that students read as many of the classics, as many of the great books, as they used to read. Indeed, if the growth of libraries and the changes in methods of instruction had yielded the fruits which we might reasonably have expected, textbooks would have all but disappeared. Honors courses would not continue to be an advertising medium rather than an important aspect of student life. Individual work by students would not be so much at a premium, nor tutorial instruction be so expensive. Large courses would not have syllabi so explicit in their reading lists that students have no experience in making bibliographies for themselves. In fact, cut and dried education would disappear.

The primary schools have already begun to shrink in size and high schools will have reached their peak in the not-distant future. Even if there is no recession in the number of students going from secondary schools to institutions of higher education, there will inevitably be a filtering off of those with high intellectual capacity, a separation from those with lower capacity or without intellectual interest. There will always be ambitious, or one would perhaps better say pretentious, institutions which, without resources or standards, seek to be all things to all men. But the solid and substantial institutions will more and more attempt to minister to the particular kind of students whom they can best serve. Their curricula will mature into better organized and more coherent structures. Knowledge will continue to grow and to expand, but it is not likely to discover whole new continents nor vast uncharted seas. During the period of settlement and exploitation there comes a quality of change which is more readily followed, if not controlled.

As institutions differentiate their functions, the libraries of those institutions will be encouraged to do likewise, so that, with the enormous improvement in their administration which has already taken place, their position within the structure of the college and

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university will be much more satisfactory. Moreover, we are steadily losing faith in mere accumulations of facts and are rediscovering the ancient truth that the disciplines are more significant than data, that reflection is more rewarding than information, and that wisdom is more than knowledge. As these ideas crystallize, teaching will have less and less the aspects of stuffing; it will take on more and more the character of stimulation and guidance. Whenever that occurs, books of substance and character will come into their own; the better currency of worth-while literature and of scholarship will drive out the debased currency of the textbook.

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## *Educating the Community Through the Library*

BY LYMAN BRYSON

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EDUCATING a community—or trying to—is like trying to feed a Hydra. The more you give the monster, the more ravening mouths it develops. Your success only makes your task more difficult. However, the libraries have accepted responsibility for this seemingly impossible business. They have to face it, unless they want to retire again into being mere keepers of books as they were once long, long ago supposed to be. Of course, librarians cannot be expected to be far in advance of the other educators of adults in understanding the nature of their common work. In fact, they are probably less well placed than others when it comes to calling on psychologists and other technical specialists. They have few helpers to whom they can assign definite segments of their problem in the hope of building up piecemeal a system of facts. But they have passed beyond the stage of supposing that all that is needed to educate a community is a librarian with a few books and an impersonally ardent disposition. To a layman it appears that most of them are in the discouraged second stage, when all one's first illusions have withered and mastery has not yet grown in their place. This is a very healthy state to be in. Now stock can be taken, the instruments looked over and ultimate aims somewhat better defined.

In the first attack on almost any problem people start with a

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formula, or several of them. For educating communities there have been two, both popular. They are: Find out what they want and give it to them; and, Decide what they need and give it to them. Neither one is much good but both have to be looked at, because both have bedeviled our thinking.

May we examine first the more generous and amiable of the two. Find out what the people want and give it to them. Do people know what they want? Perhaps they do, but if so it is only in relation to a known series of choices. People, even very intelligent or cultivated people, are not bundles of articulate and eager desires running around looking for clearly foreseen satisfactions. Nobody can want something that he never heard of. Very few people are able even to take the first steps toward making up their minds until after there has been a parade of choices from which they can take things to examine and test out. You cannot find out what people are interested in by asking them simple questions. Moreover, most of them react only to real choices, not imaginary ones. Consequently, any educator, a librarian or anyone else who undertakes to meet the "thought" of the public, will have to send out a catalog, not of things that people might want but of things he is ready to give them, before he can expect to make a beginning.

Suppose that is done. The librarian has taken the first step of providing for his potential customers a series of real choices. Can he find out by that device what it is that they are interested in? Do people know what they want even when they see what can be had? Many do, of course, and many do in certain areas of possible interest but not in others. For educational purposes, the useful point to be noted is that very often what has greatest educational potentiality, that is, the interest which has the greatest possible development for a person, is the one most obscure and inarticulate in his mind.

Practical workers advise us to learn what people want by looking at what they have taken. Librarians can look at circulation records and squeeze out neat patterns of readers' interests. No doubt that

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all helps; I am a firm believer in the development of the sociology of reading by all the devices and techniques the sociologist knows. But there are facts that shake one's faith in circulation figures as records of general community interest. In the first place, as librarians know but like to forget, half of all the circulation in the average public library is among students who are enrolled in some educational institution and read mostly by assignments from teachers. Worse—it is known that about 63 per cent of all the reading recorded in the average public library's circulation lists is done by about 10 per cent of the readers. It is easy enough to find out what a small part of the community has taken and tried in the past. But the 90 per cent who read only a third of the books are those whose interests we ought to be able to discover.

All this is not to say that there is no good at all in trying to find out what people want. Educators of communities should study with sedulous care every indication of areas in which people might be responsive. But it may be useful to cry a warning against relying on the formula. Giving them what they want is not so easy, even supposing that we have all the money and all the people necessary to meet the need if and when discovered.

In spite of difficulties one may still believe that the librarian's responsibility for educating the public and the community is determined by the essential meaning of this first formula. If so, the library must provide a dynamic pattern of choices which will provide chances for occasional coincidences with parts of the dynamic patterns of personal interests. For it is not only that the public is a changing group of people; each person in it frequently changes. He changes in the most placid of existences because he must somehow and in some measure grow up. He changes because he exhausts one interest and looks around for another. He changes when some subject is explored far enough to show that it is not at all what he thought it was. He changes because of events in the world and because of events in his own life.

Well-regulated art museums keep much of their material, good

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material, that is, in storage. No more is exposed to visitors than can be displayed with proper emphasis on its importance or in some design that will give it significance. But the material in the storage vaults is constantly being searched to make up new designs and new displays. The community being educated by the museum is offered only a reasonable segment of all that the museum might offer, no more than can be swallowed at a time, and the museum itself is constantly changing itself into a new place by drawing upon its concealed riches. A library does this, of course, with open shelves where books march before the passing readers' eyes. The point I am making here is only that if one really expects to explore the interests of the public he must do it by the greatest possible development of changing displays. It is good for confirmed readers to feel that the library is home, a place full of friends. But it is also necessary that this pleasant place shall be constantly renewed and rearranged. Sometimes one thinks that it might be an excellent idea for libraries to appoint docents similar to those in museums. They could perambulate little groups of readers up and down among the stacks, pointing out what is in them (if readers could be persuaded to follow such a mentor), bringing as many people as possible within actual reach of as many books as possible. If you want to give people what they want you can do it best by constantly reminding them of all the riches there are in the world that can be wanted.

The other formula deserves also a certain amount of consideration, inadequate though it may be. Shall we decide what people need and give them that? Librarians cannot avoid exercising a certain amount of choice as to what intellectual experiences other people shall have. No library can contain all the books in the world; no library could possibly bring all books to the attention of all readers even if it had them. With the most scrupulous fair-mindedness and desire to be hospitable to all points of view, the librarian still has to choose which books shall be made available to the consumer. But he can be a humble, studious and honest person at this

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task. He need not be either arrogant with superior wisdom or timid with self-distrust. In these two extremes he is still exercising the function of educator but doing it badly. And I think he is doing best when he says that what people really need is the greatest possible opportunity for finding out what has been written on all the subjects they can find enticing. By that definition of "need" the librarian can follow the second formula, provided a modicum of good taste goes with it.

This matter of deciding what people shall read is only a small part of the general question, how can libraries or, more exactly, librarians educate the community? What is a librarian? Is he a member of the community? One hopes so. Is he a leader? One hopes for that, too. But the thing that needs to be thought about for a moment is whether or not his position as the head of an institution is enough to make him a leader.

One of the most interesting lessons to be learned from studying the professional training of various kinds of institutional workers who deal with the public is that each tends to think of his own institution as central with the others grouped in satellite positions around it. I have for some time been teaching in a seminar in which are gathered social workers, teachers, missionaries, secretaries in YMCA's and YWCA's, ministers, school administrators, and librarians. They all have a common interest in adult education. And it frequently happens in this group that we can let them discover that each one has been quite unconsciously or perhaps quite artfully thinking of his own work as the starting point for any good that can be done to the public. We have long arguments in some sessions of that class as to who should take the initiative in directing the reading of an individual or a family. It is a shock to the librarian to discover that a social worker may consider that she has a prior right to start a person on a course of intellectual improvement. And the teacher sits by in amazement that either of the others would dare to assume such a responsibility when obviously the teacher is equipped for it.



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It may be quite proper for each to think of his own institution as central. That may be necessary for healthy professional zeal. But if we find that everyone thinks of his own institution as central we are not getting very far toward deciding just what being the head of a public library does to determine the position of a person in his community. It is very likely that the training and temperament of a librarian will give him a natural, not an institutional, leadership in certain aspects of his community's cultural life. At least one might think so, and I hasten to say that in my own experience, looking at the situation from the outside, it has often been so. But I do not believe that the librarian as such can assume that people will give him leadership in educating the community unless he proves his personal fitness for it. In very small communities the librarian is likely to be overshadowed in leading community programs for cultural betterment by the school superintendent. In very large communities he is likely to be not well enough known unless he has striking personal qualities and is eternally busy in civic affairs. The chances then of being at the head or being the instigator of any community program of cultural importance are very largely determined by the kind of person he happens to be. He has one great advantage over a social worker, a religious worker or a teacher. Even if someone else plans the campaign and acts as general in practical decisions, the librarian is necessarily head of the "service of supply." He cannot very well be left out of any plan for community education and no plan is likely to be a success unless it has his intelligent and hearty cooperation.

The librarian, moreover, can be expected eventually to approach this problem with his own professional preoccupations and with the use of his own techniques. We have long been waiting for librarians to begin to think about adult education as professionals rather than as amateurs. By this I mean that we have been waiting for them to begin to think through their own special technical problems, such as book selection, or cataloging, in such a way as to make those techniques significant for adult education instead

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of giving to the adult education movement only their general counsel and their sympathetic support. If one accepts, as I do, the concept of the librarian as primarily an adult educator, and the concept of adult education as primarily an individual's search after the satisfactions of his own soul, most of what librarians and libraries can do will always be the building up of those possibilities that put persons in reach of books. Adult education has many phases and certainly many of them must always be carried on by groups. But if the ultimate aim of group work is communion with thoughts and experiences greater than our own, few of us can find those in great measure except by reading. We refresh ourselves from study by conversation and discussion but we fortify ourselves for further discussion by reading.

Perhaps the most important thing for us to say about the librarian as the educator of the community is the most obvious. He must serve the whole community with books. Some librarians do not. They accept the principle but do not practice it; that is, they serve the people who come to the library but do not exert much effort for those who are somehow out of the sphere of its influence. The movement toward branch libraries, giving the books to the people, is recognition, of course, that this attitude is to be given up. Sometimes when I look at the vast piles of stone that are called public libraries—beautiful marble cemeteries—I pray for a charge of dynamite that would blow them in a great scatteration over the whole community. So many of the books would do more good where they happened to fall than they do now, gathering dust on the shelves. In sober truth, scattering books everywhere, in the most unlikely places, so that men cannot fail to see them and may be tempted to pick them up would not result eventually in smaller and less imposing central libraries; it would result in greater ones.

The main job of educating a community is to enlarge the freedom of men and women by letting them know how many things there are in the world that are worth learning and enjoying. For this purpose a library is merely an instrument in the hands of the librar-

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ian. It is the librarian who educates the community because it is the librarian who so manages the supply of books that greater and greater numbers of the people know what the books are and find out what they can do. There are other tasks for other workers but none is more important than this.

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## *The Library's Part in Developing the Citizen*

BY R. RUSSELL MUNN

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TO OBTAIN the kind of citizens who will solve the many problems of our new civilization, it is essential that we redirect our philosophy of civic education. When the Daughters of the American Revolution state in a broadside: ". . . no country, perhaps, is so prosperous as ours and any individual has an opportunity to aspire to the highest position of honor under this government while a citizen. Our prosperity is undoubtedly due to this incentive for all men have an equal chance," they are expressing the philosophy of the nineteenth century. As a creed for American citizenship it is no longer effective. Indeed it is dangerous and to insist upon it would invite the second revolution, which this group so heartily fears. The new industrial age has made individuals into integral parts of one large composite system and it is as such that we must think of them as citizens. The old *laissez faire* claim that enlightened self-interest, if left alone, will work out for the benefit of all, is no longer valid, if it ever was.

When the house of cards collapsed in 1929 the most important casualty was the rugged individualist. It is highly significant that a concept which for centuries has been so respectable should have so suddenly and completely lost caste. The passing of this part of

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it, however, does not necessarily mean the total eclipse of the old American dream. There are still resources enough left to make this a "land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man"<sup>1</sup> if we can only change our system from a competitive one which, albeit expensive, was effective in the building period, to one of cooperation for the common good. Maury Maverick, a congressman who, until recently, has had the uncommon ability of getting himself elected on the basis of his service to his country rather than to special interests, puts it this way:

"Cooperative endeavor is forced upon us. Only by such endeavor can we have the things which we severally lack. For certainly all this talk about how a man should have self-reliance and initiative and be a good American like our sturdy forefathers, when a man has to grow corn on a pavement, is sheer cruelty. . . . The whole pioneer philosophy has changed from the idea of individual isolation to cooperative endeavor with proximity of individuals. Only in this way can individuality be saved."<sup>2</sup>

We can hardly forget, at this time, the world situation. At this moment we are passing through the most critical period in the history of Western civilization. Intelligent people of all nations are looking to America to preserve the idea of democracy for future generations. According to Thomas Mann, the United States is "the lone bulwark against the destruction of liberty and freedom . . . and must put its social influence to work . . . before it is too late."<sup>3</sup> We must show, by peaceful precept this time, rather than by resort to arms, that our country, at least, is safe for democracy. To be safe this democracy must rest on the intelligence and cooperative spirit of its individual citizens.

There are grounds for hope, partly owing to the success of the new conception of education. Informality is its keynote and the

<sup>1</sup>J. T. Adams, *Epic of America* (new ed.; Boston: Little, 1933), p.417.

<sup>2</sup>*A Maverick American* (N.Y.: Covici, Friede, 1937), p.39-40.

<sup>3</sup>"The price of citizenship," *National Municipal Review*, XXVII (March, 1938), p.127.

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development of the right kind of individuality is its aim. Instead of inculcation, the "stamping in" of facts and habits by lectures and drills, new curricula call for activities which develop the spirit of curiosity, activities which encourage the individual to find out for himself, and prepare himself for life as a member of a group and not merely as a single atom competing with 100,000,000 others. In this new scheme the library's stock is advancing rapidly. As sources of information, the textbook and the teacher's head are being supplanted to an appreciable extent by the library. This has an important bearing on civic education.

The constant worry of the good teacher of social science is the essential conservatism of the administrative authority. Attempts to describe social concepts which did not happen to be approved by the Constitutional Convention have cost many a good teacher in this country his job. The good school library can bring great relief in this respect. The teacher can avoid the usually false charge of radical indoctrination by simply bringing such matters up for consideration and referring the students to the different points of view as contained in the library. Instead of a slave driver the good teacher then becomes a guide or a referee.

But if a large part of this burden is to be shifted to the school librarian, the question is: Can she take it? Is she going to meet the responsibility? And will she be successful in avoiding the onslaughts of the watchdogs of the public mind? Meeting the responsibility involves the elementary principle of adequately covering all sides of controversial issues. This, to me, means far more than the inclusion of the odd pamphlet by Norman Thomas or Harry Laidler, although that would be more than some will admit today. It means that the whole leftward side should be *well* covered. There can be little worry about the middle and the right being represented if the library subscribes to the normal number of newspapers and periodicals and makes the usual selection of books. Adequate representation of the leftward point of view is the direct responsibility of the library and, whether or not we agree with the ideas

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expressed, we must defend to the death our right to include them in our collections. If we can take our stand here firmly and immediately we shall have done much to prevent many keen and advanced teachers from either quitting the profession or degenerating into disillusioned drones.

What has been said of school libraries goes for public libraries as well. In the case of colleges and universities, I am assuming, with some mental reservations, that the above advice is superfluous. But the public libraries face a real problem, particularly concerning young adults. These young people come swarming in, in such numbers that some of the forward-looking libraries, like New Rochelle, are setting up separate departments to meet their needs. We have been grossly underestimating the importance of this group. A recent survey<sup>4</sup> of the New York Public Library's Circulation Department reveals the fact that 75 per cent of the adult registrants are between the ages of 15 and 30. If this is typical of other cities it is an astonishing discovery with important implications for librarians. The problem which concerns us here is that many of these youngsters, having recently graduated from or discontinued school and having come into contact with the world of affairs, are anxious to learn some of the economic and political facts of life. Are we going to continue giving them little else besides the old escape literature, the *White shadows in the South Seas*, the *Flying carpets* and the Lowell Thomases? Of course these are necessary and so are the books on flying and radio and other physical sciences. But what about the social sciences? These young men and women are at an age when permanent attitudes are being formed. Gilbert's famous ditty about boys and girls being either little liberals or little conservatives from birth is amusing satire but factually quite untrue. Most of our opinions and attitudes are formed before we are thirty. It is extremely important, then, if we wish to develop a liberal and progressive electorate for the next generation, that we let them see the grave shortcomings of the world in which they

<sup>4</sup>W. C. Haygood, *Who uses the public library?* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Pr. [1938]).

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must make their living. For the older adults, who, because of bitter personal experience or through genuine sympathy for their fellow citizens, are anxious to make this a better world for us all, let us have adequate material in which they can discover the rotten spots in our body politic and in our economic system. And let us help them obtain the books and pamphlets which will give them a picture of something closer to the heart's desire toward which they all may strive.

It is quite impossible to tell how much actual voluntary censorship is practiced by public libraries. There is a little study<sup>5</sup> on the circulation of proletarian novels in 30 representative American libraries which might give some hint concerning library holdings of one type of "questionable" material. A common tendency among librarians is to consider the whole of their fiction circulation as a recreational function, overlooking the immense educational value of many of our modern novels. Experiments with radio and films have proved that the best way to teach a lesson or to demonstrate a point is to dramatize it. It is absorbed much more easily and the impression left on the mind is clearer and more lasting. The purposeful novel, which does just this, is gaining rapidly as an educational medium. This applies to the so-called proletarian group and no one who follows current critical opinion or who professes an appreciation for powerful writing can afford to neglect this important new body of American writers. One of them, Steinbeck, has recently "arrived" as a best seller. Yet what does Mr. Bowman's survey tell of the library holdings of the proletarian novel? Of the 10 titles chosen for the survey, only 1 of the 30 libraries (Detroit) has as many as 8. Two had none at all and the average holding for each library was 3.4 titles. Writers like Halper, Steinbeck, Lumpkin and Mrs. Dargan do not deserve such treatment and, since their literary value can hardly be questioned, the charge of voluntary censorship is justified.

<sup>5</sup>John S. Bowman, *An analysis of public library borrowing of proletarian novels* (unpub. doct. dissertation. Penn. State College. 1939).



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There are those who argue that, since the daily press and current popular periodicals present so consistently the reactionary side of public affairs, the public library has an obligation, for the sake of truth, to emphasize and promote reading of the radical point of view. Our traditional impartiality would hardly allow a strong stand in this direction. On the other hand, we cannot profess to be impartial unless we honestly attempt to stock the literature of the left (pamphlets, books and periodicals) in quantities that are adequate for the present and potential demand.

What should be our attitude toward the present labor struggle going on in this country? Questions of the rights and obligations of citizenship are of paramount importance here. Labor, and this term applies now to a large body of school teachers, will continue to fight for its standard of living in periods of rising prices and to maintain its gains when depressions set in. The new movement towards vertical organization, involving as it does the masses of unskilled laborers, is faced squarely with the vital task of education. In an article entitled "Discipline and education found unions' great need," the *Christian Science Monitor* quotes one CIO official as saying, "Organization is one thing, unionization another. It takes experience, maybe years, to become a capable trade unionist"; and an AF of L leader is reported to have stated, "I used to think organization was everything. Now I have changed. I see that education is more important."<sup>6</sup> What organization is in a better position to help them than the public library? Through our facilities they can compile information valuable in negotiations, they can find out the mistakes of some previous labor movements and why others succeeded; they can discover how they might improve their purchasing power through consumer cooperatives; they can learn methods of political procedure whereby their aims may be achieved by democratic means. And if we are sympathetic and show our willingness to aid them in these proper endeavors we shall have made powerful friends who will help us in our time of need . . . which is most

<sup>6</sup>F.W. Carr, in *Christian Science Monitor*, August 5, 1937.

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of the time. Again we owe it to our democratic tradition to do all in our power to inject reason and knowledge into this vital struggle to the end that industrial peace and economic justice will result.

There is one other thing which is essential to the library's part in developing citizens. We must reach the people. We have heard a great deal about the 45,000,000 without library service. There are as many more in this country who do not use what they have, largely because our library facilities are inadequate or inappropriate.

For the cities a good central collection is not enough. We must decentralize to a far greater extent than we have done so far. John Chancellor, in his study of the TVA libraries,<sup>7</sup> suggests that, just as special libraries have developed techniques to furnish nuggets of information to large organizations or groups, so do the requirements of informal popular adult education call for special techniques and special collections. He regards the TVA community libraries as demonstrations of this important need. By setting up shop in the community centers, next door to the post office and across from the grocery store, they come in close contact with everyone in the neighborhood. By concentrating on informality in architecture, procedures, and in their whole general tone (by permitting smoking, for example,) they appeal to the most timid of potential readers. Their books are fresh and attractive both in appearance and content. These libraries are small enough to avoid confusing beginners yet they are so organized that they can deliver the goods to more experienced readers through interlibrary loan arrangements. To carry out this principle in a large city system would mean smaller and more numerous branches than is common today, and more inviting ones. It would mean considerably more duplication of the so-called "readable books," and a great deal more weeding out of the titles which have ceased to be attractive. These branches must be staffed adequately to avoid the hurry and impersonality which readers find so annoying in our libraries today. Might I suggest that these informal reading rooms should be as ubiquitous

<sup>7</sup>*The library in the TVA adult education program* (Chicago: A.L.A., 1937), p.43, ff.

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as chain stores? The time is not far distant when every school will contain an adult branch library. Surely, as long as we are conservative in our demands our appropriations will continue to be conservative.

The mention of chain stores suggests the question of the rental libraries. In planning to attract more nonreaders we are confronted with that constantly debated point in the philosophy of librarianship, to what extent should we cater to popular demand? In an article describing the enormous increase in the number of rental libraries, one proprietor is quoted as follows: "The time is coming when the public libraries may be used almost entirely for reference with rental libraries providing the current books for readers."<sup>8</sup> A most interesting comment from the outside! There can be little doubt that the current decline in public library circulation is partly due to the expansion of the rental library. And their present stock in trade is by no means confined to the "hammock romance." They are rapidly entering the field of the best fiction and current non-fiction, competing with the public library on its own ground. Perhaps the above prophecy will come to pass and before long informal adult education through reading will retail at 3 cents a day. Perhaps, on the other hand, the printed page will be crowded out of the field altogether by further development in modern means of communication. This trend is voiced by Gilbert Seldes as follows:

"Between the radio giving him the news and the moving picture condensing and dramatizing novels, the necessity for reading steadily diminishes. When they coalesce in television and make the average man a spectator of world events wherever they occur, and at the same time afford him an entertainment with such luxury as ancient despots could hardly imagine, the private art of reading may disappear before the new universal art."<sup>9</sup>

As adult education agencies, these competitors for the leisure time

<sup>8</sup>*Christian Science Monitor*, Weekly Magazine Section, July 28, 1937.

<sup>9</sup>*The movies come from America* (N.Y.: Scribner, 1937), p.15.

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of our citizens have, at the present time, a major drawback. They are conducted by private people or organizations for the purpose of private gain. The public library, on the other hand, is an institution staffed by trained people who have, or should have, as their major objective the creation of an intelligent and informed electorate which is indispensable to a successful democracy. While books continue to be important in education, we are obligated to extend and guide their use as much as possible.

Concerning suburban development, there are points in the Resettlement Administration's<sup>10</sup> "greenbelt town" idea which are full of significance for libraries. R.A.'s contention is that, as a building boom must come in the next few years if we are to raise or even maintain our present living standards, it is the part of wisdom to do a little advance thinking about it in order to avoid some of the ghastly mistakes of the past. Their experimental towns near Washington, D. C., Cincinnati and Milwaukee are demonstrating many advantages inherent in building planned satellite towns as single units under a single ownership with the stress laid on community living. In each demonstration the blueprints include a combination school and community building which is planned to serve the children in the daytime and the adults at night. In the preliminary surveys conducted in each of the above localities, in which thousands of individuals were questioned, it was found that, among all the community facilities asked for, a library was most in demand. It received even more votes than did the swimming pool. A library in such a building, which is a school, lecture hall, avocational and recreational center, cannot fail to be effective if it is well staffed and adequately stocked. That the community center scheme will work is proved by the successful English experiments of many years standing at Watling Estate, near London, and Perry Common, Birmingham, to mention but two. And there are the TVA towns of Norris and Pickwick Landing to prove it in this country. There are vast differences between this kind of library service and the

<sup>10</sup>Now Farm Security Administration.

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deadly little affairs (Open every Thursday, 2 to 4 P.M.) which are dignified by the name of library in so many small towns.

What has been said of these suburban satellite towns applies, with some variations, to rural extension branches. The county and regional library patterns are pretty well set; what is needed here is more of them and better support. In this connection, while librarians as a group were arguing over whether or not we should ask for federal aid, the school people were not so backward and already they have submitted to the President their plan for equalizing educational opportunity throughout the country with federal aid. Thanks to their broad view, libraries were included, willy-nilly. School libraries constitute an important part of their recommendations. So will the combination type which I have just mentioned. It is extremely important that librarians cooperate with the educators as they are now doing in this long forward step.

There is no field of educational endeavor today that requires more hard thinking and courageous convictions than that of education for citizenship. That these implications are recognized by some schoolmen is indicated by the following quotation from a recent *Yearbook* of the National Education Association's department of superintendence:

"Educators will probably face a desperate struggle if they run counter to the prejudices and interests of big business and finance. But if education is unwilling to assert a dignified independence of vested economic interests, it might as well surrender without a struggle."<sup>11</sup>

Librarians are, or should be, faced with the same problem. They must support the advance of the liberal wing of educators in their effort to modernize school curricula to cope with the myriad unsolved puzzles of twentieth century society. In adult education the need is as pressing as it is in the schools. Our objective is to serve

<sup>11</sup>*The improvement of education*. 15th Yearbook (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of Superintendence, National Education Association, 1937), p.117.

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all the people well. At present the library borrowers constitute a very small minority of the total population. No wonder our existence is frequently overlooked by sociologists and educators. The library has an important role but we have been cautiously pecking at a problem whose solution is vital to the development of the citizens who must build the new kind of democracy required by the new age.

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## *The Special Library Looks Forward*

BY RUTH SAVORD

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WE HAVE had libraries as long as the world has had a way of expressing itself by means of symbols put together so as to convey thought. From ancient days when books were chained and most libraries were housed in monasteries, down to the present-day era of vast marble halls, the word "library" has all too often produced a mental picture of a somewhat mausoleum-like structure containing large collections of books, often dusty, musty and of varying ages.

Nineteenth century America, which gave us the beginnings of free public library service, did much to lighten this picture. The development of children's rooms, story hours, traveling, school, prison, and county libraries, together with the great promotion of adult education through the library, served to make the movement more significant and more useful to the public.

But the very aim of this movement, designed as it was for *all* the people, made it impossible for it to meet the demands of the individual patron whose need was not for sources from which he might extract facts but for the facts themselves—a class of patron which became increasingly numerous. The turn of the century saw these demands met by the assembly of collections of specialized information—a new kind of library. To the administrators of these collections came an opportunity for pioneering such as had not

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existed since the days of Browne, Cutter and Dewey. They had to adapt old library methods, evolve new techniques for the care and use of the mass of print which, even then, was pouring from our printing presses, and prove themselves research workers in fact, as well as in name. In so doing, they opened up a whole new front which has been a continuing challenge to the profession—special librarianship.

In contrast to the traditional college or public library, these "special libraries" deal primarily with the present and the future (consequently, the material of most vital importance is not in books, often not even in print); they are confined to some special interest or to the literature of one business or of one subject; they serve a specific organization with a limited clientele; they reach out for information, classify it in such a way as to make it available quickly, check it, see that it is pertinent, authoritative and up to date and bring it to the attention of the right man at the right time; they are clearing houses of live ideas and live problems which are peculiar to the organization which they serve; they are administered by a trained staff with a clear knowledge of the activities, present and future, of the group they serve.

The first adaptation of this idea was in legislative reference work, where, on the basis of information collected, aid was given in the preparation of bills, in digests of legislation, in analysis of arguments, etc. Having proved its value in the state, the next step was to apply it to cities—hence the formation of municipal reference bureaus. A logical development spread the good work to public administrative offices and federal departments, with a few enlightened business and commercial organizations adapting it to their needs. So the situation stood in 1914 at the outbreak of the World War.

During and after that economic upheaval, statesmen and business men alike were facing a new era; the United States changed almost overnight from a debtor to a creditor nation, bringing entirely new problems to our bankers and financiers; the scientific,



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academic and industrial workers were all asking, "What of tomorrow?"; new enterprises were being contemplated and old ones revolutionized; new markets had to be obtained and old ones retained; the whole life of the country which had been on a wartime basis had to be readjusted to peacetime conditions. All of this called for recourse to facts—such detailed facts that the public library, with its more general inquiries, was not able to meet the demand. The facts were procurable but buried in the mass. The special library came to reclaim information from printed sources and make it available.

In the last twenty years the idea has spread to banks and investment houses; to chambers of commerce, trade, professional, civic, religious, and labor associations; to boards of education; to insurance, public utility, manufacturing, engineering and advertising firms; to museums, foundations, publishing houses and newspapers—in brief, into every field of human activity. In addition, many large public libraries organized special divisions which are decentralized and which provide the essential functions of a special library. This sort of special division really constitutes another type of special library. Some departmental libraries in the larger universities, serving the faculty and students of a special school, and similarly organized, may also be considered as special libraries.

With the coming to the fore of younger men, many of whom were graduates of our university schools of business administration, and of others who had learned in universities and technical schools the worth of good library service, the value of information *per se* came to be recognized. Analysis of the 1935 directory of special libraries showed that, of about 2,000 well-established special libraries then being maintained, roughly one fourth were in the fields of business and economics; one third scientific and technical; one fifth sociological, and the rest in fine arts and miscellaneous fields. When we consider that there are in this country approximately 16,000 banks, 4,400 insurance companies, 2,200 daily newspapers, and 2,400 major trade and professional associations, and that in these

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four fields only 500 well-organized special libraries exist, it is evident that the possibilities for future development are very great.

But, in order to make these potential libraries actualities, the ranks of well-trained special librarians will be greatly increased by close cooperation of the two professional organizations—the American Library Association and the Special Libraries Association—looking toward a better selection of new recruits in the profession. Such a cooperative program will take the form of presenting to college students in their freshman year, before they have decided on their majors, the vocational possibilities of the whole library profession, setting forth its various phases—public, college, school, county, special—certainly a wide enough scope for all tastes. Along with this presentation will go suggestions for preprofessional courses similar to our premedical programs. With proper promotion and cooperation between colleges and the library profession, students so inclined will decide early in their college careers to enter the library field and will plan accordingly. When students realize that it does not necessarily mean divorce from their chosen subject fields, but an opportunity to cultivate them in a less formal educational agency than the school or college, more of the type needed will be attracted to librarianship as a profession.

Having sown the seed of specialization in this fertile ground, our library schools will, at the same time, begin the adaptation of their traditional training courses so that, on graduation from college, these students will find proper courses in special library methods which will send them out prepared to organize and administer libraries in their chosen fields. Supply always follows demand and our library schools will meet the demand, once it is created. In the meantime, the Special Libraries Association “of tomorrow” will have worked out and put into practice an extensive internship plan in all of its chapters so that recruits may have an opportunity to acquire practical experience.

While this force of trained personnel is being built up, our public libraries in large communities of diversified industries will have

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been encouraging the organization and growth of special libraries to strengthen their own resources, for no public library, with its limited public funds, can ever hope to compete against the special library when well-developed and backed by the resources of a private organization. With cooperation between all libraries, we will eventually find each large urban region serving as a single research unit in which the local public library system will be surrounded by a group of financial, commercial, industrial, medical, technical and other special libraries—all giving better service with help from each other. There may be one public library system in each community but there will be as many special libraries as there are separate important enterprises able to support them.

With intelligent librarians in charge of these libraries, the whole library movement will be furthered. The users and supporters of special libraries are professional and business men who mold public opinion and foster public undertakings. If these men are satisfied with the service that they receive from the libraries which they support personally, they will be willing and anxious to further the interests of the public library system in their own communities.

During the last twenty years, the situation in special libraries has paralleled rather closely the conditions that existed in the early days of the public library movement in this country. Then, there were no trained librarians and hence our pioneers in the movement—with no techniques developed, no codes by which to be guided, with classification schemes in the making, subject heading lists unrecorded—had to struggle, confer, progress by trial and error, step by step, sometimes failing but more often succeeding. It was a long, hard road that has led to the present position of the library movement in the United States. So, in the special library field, the conditions that had to be met, the psychology of the clientele that had to be studied, the demands for speed of service, were all new problems which required an unusual gift for adaptation. Like the public library pioneers, these newly appointed administrators of special libraries had to struggle, discuss, confer,

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experiment, make mistakes, fail, and succeed. The present depression gave the clearest indication of how well they have succeeded in at least one phase of the special library movement—the business and commercial library. It is a well-known fact that the American business man does not maintain for long any department which does not pay. And yet, in the years following 1929, few such libraries were disbanded while some new ones were organized. Is this not proof that these librarians met the challenge of modern business and proved that library practices and techniques can be successfully adapted to the needs of business research? Is it not also proof that our schools of library service should provide the means of preparation for work in this field among others, so that the achievements of the pioneers may be consolidated?

I venture to prophesy that, through the coordinated efforts of these pioneers, the new recruit will find standards of practice evolved and recorded for the various types of special library, whether sponsored by a corporation, an association, a government bureau, a hospital, a museum, a special department of public or university library, or by a special research institute. For each of these types of library devoted to a specific subject there will be annotated lists of basic materials and guides to sources of information with evaluations of each; lists of approved subject headings will be available for every kind of special library and for every special subject; original classification schemes, as well as expansions and adaptations of standard schemes, will be at the disposal of the special librarian of the future; clipping and information files will be in even more universal use, their problems solved and methods standardized.

With such tools at hand, routine work will be reduced to a minimum and the librarian will be able to take her rightful place in the research program of her organization. Library reports will be accepted as implicitly as the findings of laboratories—in other words the librarian will have become and be recognized as a research expert rather than a mere technician. While this is true in

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some cases even today, all too many of our workers are content with mere technical perfection and are entangled in the coils of red tape and routine.

With the whole trend of national thought turning to planning, the special library profession will be in step with the times. There will be a cooperative purchase plan, whereby duplication of expensive books, services, and magazines will be avoided entirely or, at least, greatly reduced; cataloging, appraising and reviewing of books, and many other library functions will be carried forward on a cooperative basis; in the larger cities, the Special Libraries Association will maintain reservoirs of seldom-used but important special library material—long sets of periodicals, almanacs, trade directories, statistical handbooks, and the like.

I venture to say that it will not be many years before the practical, dollar-and-cents value of special library service will have been so well demonstrated that every organization will have its information service as automatically as it now has light, heat and elevator service; that every big office building housing doctors will have its medical library for the use of tenants; those housing lawyers, a legal library; those housing engineers, a technical library, and so on through all the professions; that research libraries will be supported cooperatively by organizations with like interests so that each may have access to adequate facilities at minimum cost.

Twenty years ago, John A. Lapp, one of the pioneers of the special library movement, set forth the place of the special library in the library profession in these words:

“It may be said in general that wherever there is a problem of government, of business, of finance, of manufacturing, of commerce, there the idea of knowing all there is to know about the problem must certainly prevail in the hands of men who think and who act upon information rather than upon the rule of thumb. The extension of this idea (by means of the special library) means that the great storehouses of knowledge which have been created

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throughout the ages and which are being added to daily by research and investigation shall find a means of making the knowledge which they possess articulate in every-day affairs. Instead of being hidden in the recesses of the general library, or instead of being scattered and uncollected, it will be focused upon the jobs which men perform and will help in the solution of problems which come. . . . Enough knowledge is stored up to solve a great many of the problems of the day if channels were open between the storehouses of information, the executives who control policies and the men who carry them out."<sup>1</sup>

Special libraries have opened these channels and will continue to broaden them by carrying out their slogan, "putting knowledge to work." Librarianship has been defined as the art of directing the great sources of power in *books*. Special librarianship might well be defined as the art of directing and releasing the great sources of power in *factual information* of any kind whatsoever.

Can anyone doubt that the trend of the future is toward more and more special libraries when he visualizes the extent of the movement in every field, ranging from the large library with many thousands of books and a staff of seventy-five to administer it to the small one-man library which may consist of a few books, a few file cases, a telephone, and a resourceful librarian? The same ideal permeates the two extremes and all between, an ideal of service, of putting knowledge to work, of providing facts where and when they are needed, of knowing sources of information, of being ready to meet the demand before it is made, of watching for trends that forecast future needs and interests of the clientele served, by specialists who are incidentally librarians or by librarians who are incidentally specialists. I think I shall be unchallenged in saying that probably most important of the special library's equipment is human brains and human resourcefulness—now and in the future.

<sup>1</sup>P. F. Foster, "Information service for the community motion picture bureau," *Special Libraries*, IX (September-October, 1918), p.158-59.

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# *The Future of the Library of Congress*

BY HERBERT PUTNAM

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IN THE case of an institution the future of main concern is as to *function*: how far and in what directions this is likely to be enlarged, diversified or perhaps curtailed. But speculation as to functions is futile without consideration of the resources necessary to their exercise. In a library these include the plant, the collections and the means of developing them, the accommodation for readers, the bibliographical apparatus, the personnel and the means of maintaining and further developing it; and any provision for service relations of an extrinsic sort.

With the Annex, to be available shortly, the plant of the Library of Congress will have a capacity double that of any other existing library.<sup>1</sup> The bookstacks alone will accommodate 15,000,000 volumes, and there will be, in addition, reasonable opportunity for the housing of special collections. While no one of its reading rooms will accommodate more than 250 readers, there will be in the two buildings adequate seating for a thousand, and so disposed as to bring groups of readers within easy reach of the material with which they are severally concerned. The concern of the Library being the research investigator, rather than the ordinary student or the general

<sup>1</sup>Except perhaps the new library at Moscow which expects a capacity equal to ours.

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reader, such as overflow the municipal library of a metropolis, provision for a thousand users at a time is likely to suffice indefinitely. With the present collections—of printed books and pamphlets—at about 5,600,000 volumes, and an annual increase of about 200,000, the shelving for material of this class should suffice for perhaps 40 years. The accommodation that may fall short will be for the group collections—manuscripts, maps, music, and prints—for which the recent construction provides no corresponding addition, except through the release to their benefit of certain spaces in the main building, and their participation in the advantage of other spaces released to the personnel engaged in the treatment of material before it reaches the reader.

For the further development of the collections, there may still be reckoned the increment from copyright deposits, from official exchanges (documentary), from institutional exchanges, including the Smithsonian, and from other government establishments by transfer. The uncertain increments will be (a) those from government appropriation and (b) those from gift or bequest. The government appropriation is not fixed, but depends upon the disposition of Congress at each particular session. For general increase it has been as high as \$130,000 per annum; but it was reduced to \$100,000—although there has been an *increase* from \$50,000 to \$70,000 in the appropriation for law, and from \$175,000 to \$275,000 in the grant for books in Braille and “talking books,” as to which, however, the Library of Congress is merely a contracting and disbursing agent.

Further appropriations for special purchases—such as that of \$1,500,000 for the acquisition of the Vollbehr Collection of Incunabula—are not to be counted on. And while the present normal grant suffices reasonably for ordinary material, including reproductions, any further additions of material of *distinction* must depend upon gift or bequest. Precedent for them is already ample; but continuance of them can be expected only as, and if, the public continues to regard the Library as its national library, respects its aims as truly cultural and its service as truly scientific, is impressed



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by liberal support of it from the federal treasury, and has faith in its administration as completely free from "politics."

The collection that 40 years ago was moved from the Capitol to the new library building, though containing much material of historical and even bibliographic interest, was, from a "collector's" standpoint, commonplace. The collection today would add distinction to any group associated with it. The varied service of the Library assures utility. The recent additions to the building—including the Rare Book Room—provide both the security and the refinements which the connoisseur demands for the sensitive material that he values. With all these attractions, a collector could scarcely find a superior depository for his treasures, should he decide to dedicate them to a public service, and have no commitments either to a local institution or to the university which was his alma mater. Thus far the universities have been most successful in securing his interest. But I am inclined to think that even allegiance to them will not prevail as against the wider benefit and greater distinction which may be secured by a gift of the collection to the national library, where it will be operated in a national service. There is, therefore, prospect that, thus enriched, the collections of the Library of Congress will, even in bibliographic distinction, surpass those in any other American library, with the exception of the fortunate four privately endowed: the John Carter Brown, the Pierpont Morgan, the Henry E. Huntington, and the Folger.

International comparisons must, however, recognize that, as to the entire body of literary records prior to the invention of printing, the Library of Congress must bow to the great collections of Europe and the British Isles. Practically all such (manuscript) records in the original are permanently anchored, beyond its reach. But, accepting this, there is a partial remedy offered by the modern processes of facsimile, which, though they leave to its possessor the distinction of the original, may secure a reproduction serviceable to the student and even satisfying to the paleographer. This remedy the Library has for years been applying; and the policy pursued will

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result in an accumulation at Washington of facsimiles of manuscripts and of bibliographic rarities which will fairly exempt the American scholar from the necessity of a trip abroad.

*The Bibliographic Apparatus.* In type, this seems accepted as appropriate, the practice of the Library in cataloging conforming to the accepted standard, and its main catalog being in the "dictionary" form (author, title and subject) affected by most American libraries. There is, however, apprehension that in this form, with the tendency to multiply entries—including analyticals and cross references—it may break under its own weight and volume. This may conceivably lead to some limitation or modification.

The cards which compose this catalog are prepared by a staff of experts and are subscribed for by 6,000 regular purchasers, nearly all of them libraries. The fulness and scholarly accuracy of the entries on these cards require so much labor that the output cannot begin to keep pace with incoming material. Ideally, this service should constitute a central cataloging bureau for the entire country but, actually, it falls far short of doing so. To achieve this ideal a larger staff of catalogers is needed, as well as a larger appropriation for printing and distribution of the cards and for the acquisition of books. All this points to the desirability of a higher charge for the cards. Subscribers would still save large sums as compared with the cost of individual cataloging and the Library of Congress would be more nearly reimbursed for the cost of maintaining the service.

Recent subsidized experiments in cooperative cataloging contain great promise and should be continued on a permanent basis. They have achieved the cataloging of numerous sets which the Library of Congress alone could not deal with expeditiously, and the resulting entries, printed by the Library, have amplified its salable stock in particulars extremely important to libraries with scholarly collections.

I should anticipate on the part of the American Library Association an increasing sense of responsibility toward all these bibliographic undertakings, and even an aggressive effort to make clear

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to Congress the general benefits which they promote and so secure the additional resources necessary to their efficiency.

*Publications.* Apart from the cards (a major publishing enterprise) the publications of the Library have been numerous. It does not venture—or even think warranted—the expense of comprehensive bibliographies, but it has issued numerous “Lists of selected titles,” occasionally still issues them, and at least manifolds in some form many such lists useful for reference on the initial approach to a subject.

The publication by the Library of texts *in extenso*, even if in its collections, seems to me questionable. In the case of the Van Buren autobiography the expense was inconsiderable; in that of the *Journals of the Continental Congress* and of the *Records of the Virginia Company*, though very great, it seemed warranted as saving wear and tear upon the originals, and extending the service of the documents to scholars and students at a distance, to whom as tools they are indispensable. But as a rule the outlay would be more appropriately applied to the production and diffusion of catalogs which will announce the possession of a text, or calendars which will guide to its use.

Publication *under its auspices* of texts, catalogs, calendars or guides, where the expense is borne by some outside contribution, rests upon a different basis. I should expect more examples of it as the realization grows of the Library's unique facilities, including especially the expert advice and direction freely afforded by the specialists within its staff.

*Special Projects.* It is not merely in bibliographic undertakings that the resources of the Library have been thus utilized. Congress itself has during the past ten years committed to it the execution of several projects outside of its normal functions, yet not within the scope of any other federal agency. They may, as in the case of the *Index to state legislation*, recognize its possession of the material necessary and the apparatus; or, as in the case of the books in Braille and the talking books, the familiarity of its staff with a

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certain need and with the technique necessary to meet it. They assume the general competence of the Library in administrative matters, its sense of responsibility, and its accountability to the General Accounting Office for the disbursement of every fund committed to it, from whatever source derived.

Similar considerations have operated to commit to it projects subsidized by individuals or foundations. It cannot of course accept them unless they bear some relation, if not to its functions as a Library, at least to its larger motives in the advancement of learning and the diffusion of culture. The Library is a convenient agency. Its plant, equipment and organization supply without effort resources which obviate a drain upon the contributed fund for administrative expenses. Experts upon its staff may, without charge, supply tested counsel. Its numerous official and institutional relations give authority to its representations and influence to any appeal that it may make for cooperation. And it has prestige as the one agency of the Federal government concerned, not merely with knowledge, but with *culture*. A practical economy is in its franking privilege.

One may therefore foresee a steadily increasing number and variety of projects committed to it or at least centering at it: projects of a bibliographic nature, of course, but also projects of historical or scientific research, and enterprises in music and the fine arts, of which the past 10 years have furnished examples.

Their probable nature may be suggested by the variety of those already under way: e.g. the systematic reproduction, in photostat and film, of source material for American history located in foreign institutions or archive offices, the administration and circulation of the rotographs of literary texts secured by the Modern Language Association, the *Census of mediaeval manuscripts* in American collections, and the "Guides" (to law and to diplomatic history); the productive studies in the history and culture of China and Japan under the conduct of its Oriental Division; the development, in the Division of Fine Arts, of the general *Index to portraits*, of the

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*Archive of American architecture*, of the *Cabinet of American illustrators*; and the provision, under the will of Joseph Pennell, for the maintenance here of a Bureau of Chalcography similar in purpose to those at Paris, Rome and Madrid—a bureau that will issue popular editions, at nominal cost, of masterly prints of which the plates are in its possession.

In connection with the Music Division, the special projects have included the development (largely through work in the field) of the *Archive of American folk song* and the numerous actual performances of miscellaneous musical programs of high distinction: programs given not merely at Washington but in many other cities, and also, through broadcasts, reaching out to the entire country, and beyond its borders.

To the many such enterprises whose aim is to advance exact knowledge there are thus already added many whose purpose is to promote an understanding and appreciation of the purely cultural arts. It is difficult to predict a limit to them, should the interest continue in thus utilizing the Library as the effective medium and agency.

*The Library of Congress Trust Fund Board.* Endowments for such purposes have been attracted and facilitated by the creation 14 years ago of the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board, which can accept and administer any fund committed to it the income of which is to be applied "For the benefit of the Library, its collections, or its service." The funds already in its custody, or supplying income, total nearly \$2,000,000; and the disposition to add to them is likely to increase when the public realizes that the Board may treat any such fund as a permanent loan to the federal treasury, upon which interest will be paid perpetually at the rate of 4 per cent per annum—even though the Government is habitually borrowing at a much lower rate. An equivalent income from ordinary investment can no longer be counted upon by trustees of such funds.

*Interlibrary Loan and Information Service.* As regards these the future need only amplify practices already established and the gen-

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eral understanding of them. For years, the Library has indicated its willingness to lend, within certain limitations, the chief of which are (1) that the book requested is one that at the moment can be spared from reference use, and the privileged demands at Washington, (2) that it is not a book within the ordinary duty of a local library to supply, (3) that it is sought in the interest of serious research, by a person likely to render the use of it productive, and (4) that it is capable of transportation and exterior use without peril to its own existence or integrity.

This latter consideration is not, however, applied to bar the loan of a book merely because it is costly, rare, or difficult to replace. Such features may cause hesitation, but they are not accepted as conclusive. The merit of the request may override them, on the principle that, if the Library refuses to lend a rare book, a costly book, or an unwieldy book, it may be withholding from an important service—perhaps the most important in its career—many a volume which would thus remain static on its shelves while the opportunity beckoned for a dynamic service abroad. The number of loans is not yet impressive, but it already includes South America, Europe, and the Far East.

In its informational service, not involving the loan of the material itself, the Library extends the benefit, not merely of its collections, its bibliographic apparatus, and the skill of its technical staff, but also the knowledge and experience of the specialists on its "Faculty" and of those other specialists at Washington upon whom it freely draws. As a Bureau of Information it has therefore a considerable range, efficiency and authority. And it is responsive, as no other agency of the government is certain to be. An inquirer may count upon its disposition as he has learned to count upon the disposition of his local public library. The result has already been to direct to it a volume and variety of inquiries which taxes the physical abilities of its staff. No limit to them can be predicted. For a large group of them its Union Catalog, including already over 10,000,000 entries, supplies a unique resource, indefinite in its

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possibilities. And the Union Catalog is but one unit of many calculated to offset its lack of particular material for research by identifying the actual location of it elsewhere. A rapidly increasing use of the film will both amplify its own apparatus and serve to duplicate sections of this for the benefit of other libraries. The Annex is to contain accommodation for a competent filming, as well as photostat, plant. A television service is not improbable.

*Some Constitutional Considerations.* The Library of Congress, as constituted under the Appropriation Act of 1897-98, is a sort of hybrid. It remained a part of the legislative establishment; the librarian was not to be under the control of any department head, and his reports were to be made, not even to the President, but direct to Congress. Yet the functions assigned him were distinctly executive, for he was empowered to select and appoint his staff, "considering only fitness," and to "make rules and regulations" for the government of the institution.

These provisions and relations still subsist and, anomalous as they seem, entail certain advantages which during the past forty years have proved very convenient. One is that the Library estimates cannot be revised by the Budget Bureau; another is that they come before a subcommittee of Congress in an appropriation bill which is concentrated upon only a few items. The needs of the Library are therefore not submerged in any huge measures making provision for the executive departments. There is also the supposition, warranted by experience, that so long as the Library remains the Library of Congress, Congress will take a special pride in it, and feel a special responsibility for it, that would fail if it were detached.

While this sense of proprietorship demands from the Library special consideration for the needs of Congress and its members, Congress has never grudged the services that the Library renders to other institutions and to the public at large. The one major peril is that, the other personnel employed by Congress being subjects of patronage, there may develop a disposition to reduce to the same category the personnel of the Library, whose selection, appoint-

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ment, promotion, or dismissal have for the past 40 years been within the exclusive authority of the Librarian. Such a disposition might not take the form of a specific proposal, but, vaguely influencing individual members, may cause demands embarrassing to the administration. That such demands can be withstood is proved by the efficiency of the organization that has been developed during the past period—from a staff of 130 to one of nearly 1,000—with a professional repute everywhere unsurpassed. If, however, in the future the pressure should become excessive, the Librarian may require outside support in resisting it. This support should come particularly from the American Library Association, which must recognize that the efficiency of the national library affects the welfare of the entire community of American libraries, as well as the entire community of American scholars.

It is conceivable that at some future time it may seem wise to substitute for the Library's present constitution an organic act, more definite and more comprehensive, which will recognize the institution as a distinct governmental unit, completely executive. A less radical step would be a designation by law, as "The National Library." That designation alone, without specific detachment, would relieve the Library of such inconvenience as resides in the implication of the present title.

I have heretofore deprecated any such movement; but there are conceivable conditions under which I might favor it.

*The Users.* Apart from the obvious constituency resident at Washington, and including the scientific bureaus of the government, that which in its future development seems most significant consists of two groups: (1) the mature investigators occupied with research "calculated to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge" and (2) the student pursuing studies for an advanced degree.

The first of these is represented by visiting investigators who come to it as individuals, the second may in the future include groups organized under some program adopted by the universities. It may not always involve a program of observation and study



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conducted by accompanying instructors—though that phase is already in evidence—but it will imply some systematic plan for directing the graduate student to Washington, equipping him for his sojourn there, and assuring him the most effective use of the facilities. Incidentally, it may include some more definite assurance to his alma mater that he has employed his time effectively.

*A University Center.* In 1916 a conference of university teachers in history, political science and economics was held to consider what might be done to further and make more effective recourse to Washington of students in those subjects. There resulted a proposal for the creation of "A University Center for Higher Studies in Washington," with particulars that included supervision under a resident director, a permanent secretariat, courses by visiting professors, conferences participated in by officials of the government; and a community life, to be fostered by the construction of dormitories, refectories, rooms for social intercourse—all to be located within easy reach of the Library of Congress, which would constitute the common laboratory.

*A Vision.* The project remains only on paper. But it may conceivably interest some philanthropist in the investment necessary for the construction of the plant and for a suitable endowment. The belief that it will do so caused the Secretary of the Council of Learned Societies, Dr. Waldo G. Leland, some 10 years ago to indulge in a vision (which he confided to me) of the Capitol Hill of the future. Dr. Leland's visions are not those of a mere visionary. His nature precludes mere speculation, as does his responsibility as the guiding influence within the Council in the shaping of programs severely practical. Yet in 1927 he declared to me that he foresaw, on Capitol Hill, an establishment in the nature of a medieval university, with the Library of Congress as its magnetic and inspiring center.

Should that dream come to pass, the inspiration will consist, not in the books of their own motion, nor in the apparatus; but in a *personnel* which will vivify the collections, interpret them, by its

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own example notably expound them; a personnel that will create an *atmosphere* grateful to the visitor of experience and likely to impress itself for a lifetime upon the impressionable student; an atmosphere of sure but tolerant learning, of genial cultivation, of unaffected good breeding—friendly, hospitable, sympathetic, communicative—compounded of scholarship, of altruism, and those qualities which Lowell imputes to the true gentleman—"that good taste which is the conscience of the mind, as conscience is the good taste of the soul."

Is it fantastic to provide the opportunity for such a contact in a public institution, accessible, without formality, not merely to the "elect," but to the underprivileged citizen quite inexperienced in the approaches to culture? How otherwise can our national library realize the conception of it which Truslow Adams and others have found warranted—of the most democratic of our institutions? In what superior way can the lesson and the emotion represented by this huge accumulation of literature be made an effective influence in the ideals and conduct of that large section of our population which lacks a stimulating environment, and cannot even afford the benefits of a college career?

We take concern for their cultural needs by assuring beauty and power in our monuments, public buildings, and art galleries, whose appeal is direct. In the case of a library we can meet them only through the mediation of a competent personnel which in liaison with the collections will serve to interpret them.

*A Partial Realization.* The creation of such a personnel in the nation's library is *my* dream, not opposed to Dr. Leland's, but an obvious complement to his. Its partial incorporation is in fact here, in the "Faculty" already gathered under experimental gifts and grants: that group within its staff which includes the incumbents of its "Chairs,"<sup>2</sup> who have administrative duties but are also specialists in fields of subject matter, with a knowledge and experience

<sup>2</sup>The existing "Chairs" with permanent endowments are of American history, geography, fine arts, music, and aeronautics.

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equivalent to those of a university professor; and the holders of its "Consultantships,"<sup>3</sup> who serve merely as advisers (to the Library and the public), but bring to that service a similar equipment. Further "Chairs" will certainly be established; and the perpetuation, on an adequate scale, of the corps of consultants requires only a further general grant of \$1,000,000—even less—which will provide the permanent endowment necessary.

A national university has for years been a desire of certain educators. In the lack of it, the title is occasionally bestowed upon us. We do not crave it, must indeed challenge it, as ignoring the functions of a university and implying responsibilities which a library can never exercise. We readily admit, however, that there are functions and qualities of the Library of Congress, which, if given resource for future development, will cause it to be regarded as much more than a mere library, and in its *potencies* not inferior to the typical university. But the title "library" has also a certain nobility; and our sufficient ambition should be to ennoble it still further.

<sup>3</sup>The Consultants, from time to time provided for by grants, have been in the fields of European history, church history, political science, physical science, economics, sociology, philosophy, classical literature, Hispanic literature and English poetry. But except in two cases the existing provision for them is merely temporary.

#### COLOPHON

*This volume designed by Harold English, has been composed in Linotype Granjon, a recutting of one of the types of Claude Garamond, named in honor of Robert Granjon, a well-known printer and type-cutter of the sixteenth century. Typography by Norman W. Forgue. Printed by Louis Graf on a wove paper specially made by the Worthy Paper Company. Bound in Bancroft linen by the John F. Cuneo Company*

















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